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PAGE 183**

AUGUST 2015





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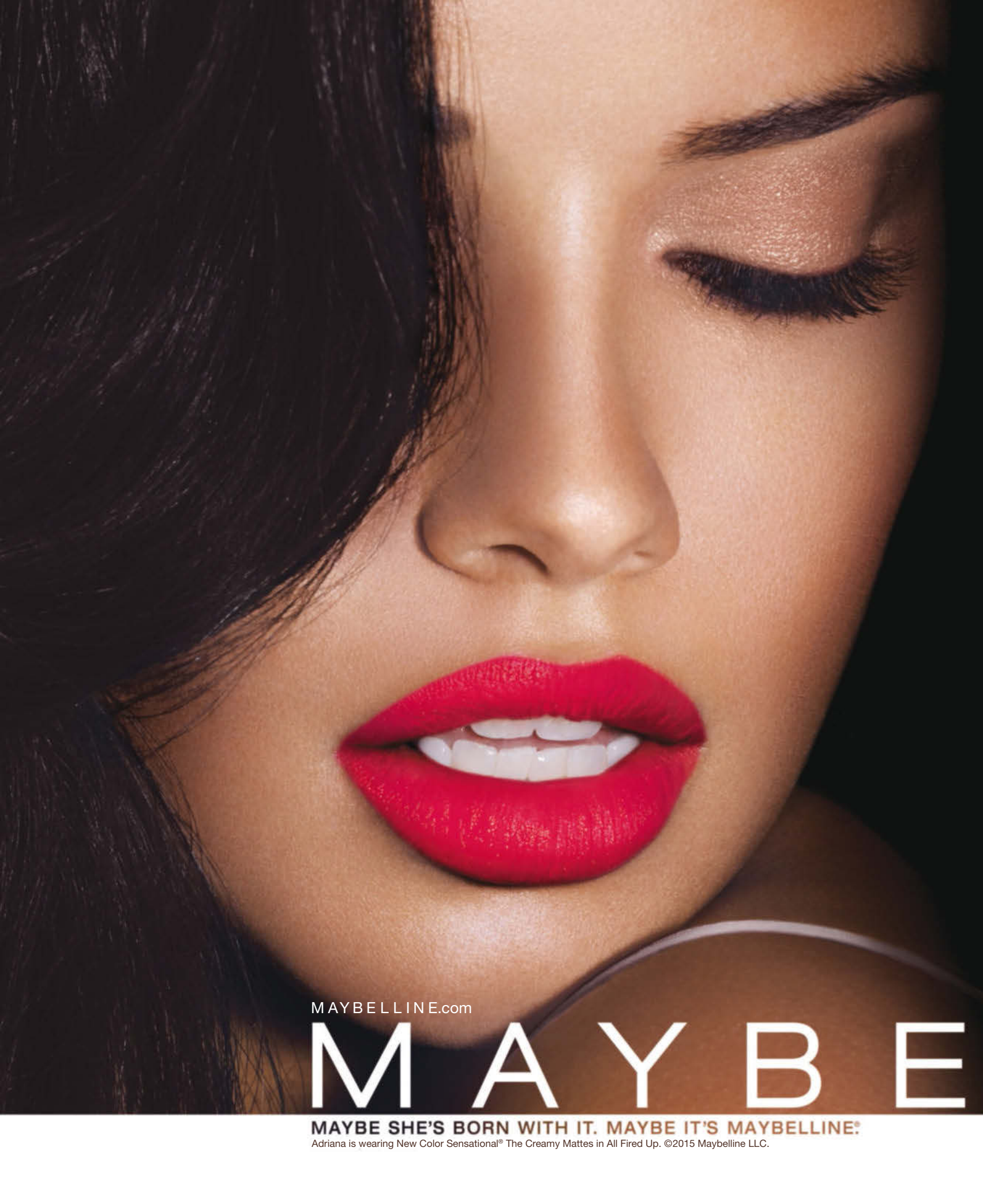


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# Thoughts



“Almost everything will work again if you unplug it for a few minutes, including you.”

ANNE LAMOTT, IN SALON (APRIL 10, 2015)

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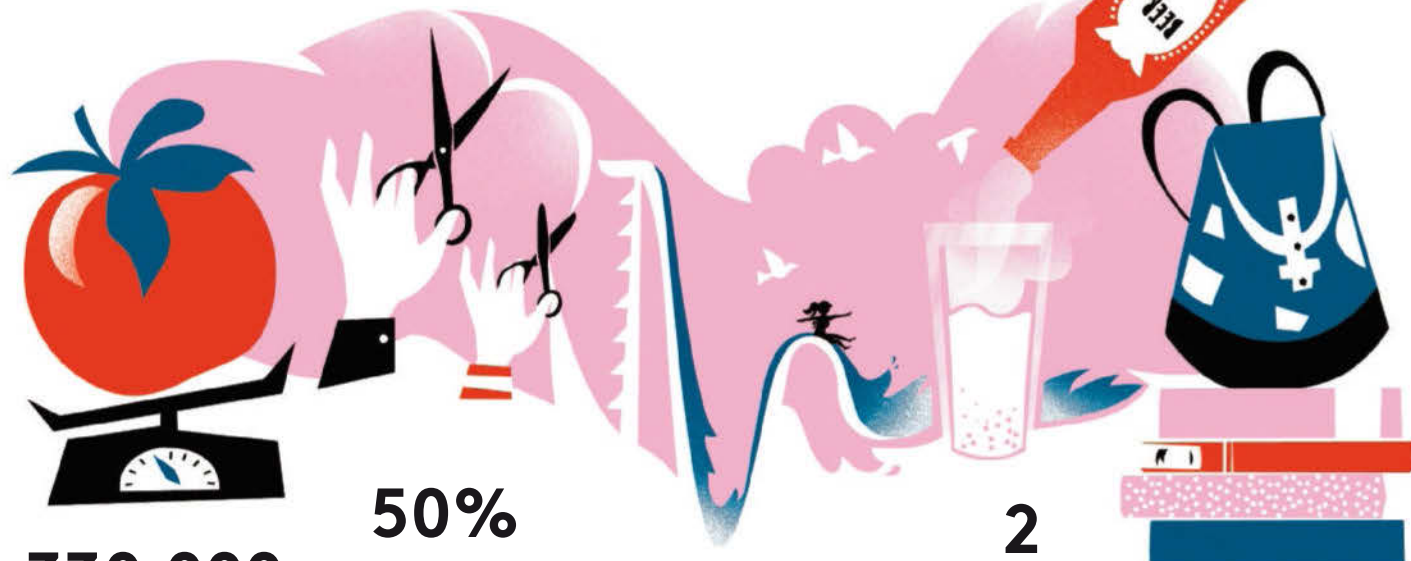


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# the Simple List

YOUR MONTHLY DOSE OF USEFUL TIDBITS, TIMELY TRIVIA,  
AND CATCHY CONVERSATION STARTERS



**330,000**  
POUNDS

The *enorme* amount of tomatoes people throw at one another during the La Tomatina Festival, in Buñol, Spain, every August. (This year it's on August 26.) What started out as a playful tussle between local boys in 1945 has turned into a tradition. Now 22,000 people participate. Trucks loaded with tomatoes drive into town, where goggle-wearing food fighters pelt one another for one hour. After that, cleanup begins. Workers spray the streets with water from a natural-spring canal, leaving them cleaner than before, thanks to the tomatoes' grime-eating acidity.



FOR MORE FUN FACTS  
AND FIGURES, follow us on  
Twitter (@RealSimple).

**50%**

How much more likely a child is to be left-handed if his or her mother is, says a study published in *Journal of Economic Perspectives*. (Sorry, dads, researchers didn't analyze your genetic connection.) In honor of National Left-Handers Day (August 13), here are some other southpaw stats: Babies in the United States who stay in the hospital for more than a week are 5 percent more likely to be left-handed, though scientists can't find a specific reason why. Eight presidents are known to have been left-handed: Garfield, Hoover, Truman, Ford, Reagan, G. H. W. Bush, Clinton, and Obama. And should you need a hand with college tuition, Juniata College, in Huntingdon, Pennsylvania, offers a \$800 to \$1,500 scholarship to one or more left-handed students annually. Cool, right?

**17**  
STORIES

The height of Verrückt, the world's tallest water slide, as certified by Guinness World Records. The 168-foot chute, which opened in 2014 at Schlitterbahn Water Park, in Kansas City, Kansas, is taller than Niagara Falls or the Statue of Liberty. Thrill seekers ride in a three-person raft, with seatbelts, and scream down a series of drops at up to 65 miles per hour. The meaning of *Verrückt*? It's German for "crazy."

Written by  
N.Jamiyla Chisholm  
Illustration by  
Darling Clementine

**2**  
FINGERS

How tall the foam, or head, on a perfectly poured beer should be, according to the new book *The Beer Bible*, by Jeff Alworth. Froth is a good thing, says Alworth. The surface of the foamy bubbles attracts hop oils, which enhances the aroma. Champagne, cider, and soda also form a head, briefly, but beer is the only beverage that can sustain one because the grain's protein prevents gas inside the bubbles from popping and escaping. On August 7, International Beer Day, impress your friends with your pro pouring skills. Place a glass over your bottle of beer, flip it, and steadily raise the bottle just over the beer as it gurgles out. (This works best with Bavarian wheat beers, says Alworth.) Or just slowly pour into a glass held at a 45-degree angle. Sip, sip, hooray.

**\$81**

What it costs, on average, to buy and fill a backpack with school supplies for a kid in need. Every year since 2001, the Operation Backpack campaign, run by the Volunteers of America charity, has distributed bags to homeless children in grades K through 12 across the country. Bags contain about 24 items (flash drives, calculators, geometry kits, dictionaries) that can help students perform better. Now and through the summer, you can donate backpacks and supplies at participating partners nationwide. For a list of locations and items needed, visit [operationbackpackusa.org](http://operationbackpackusa.org).





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Andie MacDowell  
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ON INSTAGRAM  
@real\_simple

When the temperature spikes, RS readers plunge into cool, blue waters—from the Aegean Sea to the Pacific. Share your own photos using the hashtag #rsdivein.

@GLAMPACKERSYD

"Clinging to the edge of a volcano with caldera views in sight." Santorini, Greece



@DELICIOUSLYORG

"Waiting to board a catamaran sunset cruise." Tahoe City, California



@LISALAINE

"One of the many beaches we visited." Honolulu



@SONOMACOTTAGE

"A simple afternoon poolside with family." Ventura County, California



ON FACEBOOK AND TWITTER  
@realsimple

## WHAT DOES YOUR FAMILY DO TOGETHER EVERY SUMMER?

RS readers share their favorite warm-weather traditions.

### Katie Angel

We are part of a CSA, and we go weekly to gather fresh fruits and veggies. We all pick together, then plan fun meals.

### Rhonda Meyers

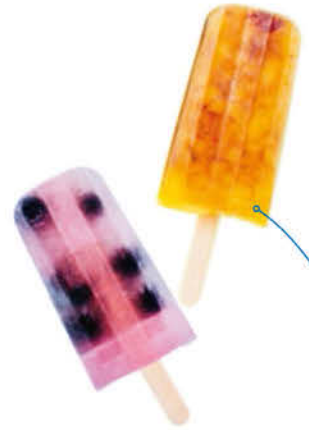
Christmas in July! Complete with presents, tree, and a big meal.

### Monica Simon

One night during the summer, we have ice cream for dinner. The kids love it! It's a tradition they will continue when they become parents.

### Diane Spyke

Sit outside at the fire pit the first night the fireflies are out.



## MAKE A SPLASH!

For guaranteed good times this summer, visit [realsimple.com/whatsnew](http://realsimple.com/whatsnew).

- Frozen treats with a boozy twist (shown above).
- Summer fashion rules you can—and should—break.
- Expert tips for making your vacation rental feel like home.
- The secret to brewing barista-quality iced coffee in your kitchen.
- 50 fun activities every family should add to their to-do list.



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# Editor's Note



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## HAVE YOU LISTENED TO REAL SIMPLE'S PODCASTS?

We have four of them—on everything from negotiating household conflicts (*The Labor of Love*) to navigating the confusion of your 20s (*Adulthood Made Easy*), handling irritating personalities (*I Want to Like You*), and boiling down kitchen basics (*Things Cooks Know*). There are new episodes every week. Go to [realsimple.com/podcasts](http://realsimple.com/podcasts) and listen for free.

**T**HERE ARE ABOUT 70,000 ways the Internet makes me feel bad about myself, and 69,750 of them involve DIY projects. (The other 250? Inaccurate or scary medical information I get whenever I have a weird pain.)

I swear I could be extremely good at all sorts of DIY projects, if I didn't have a job, a family, dogs, or the need to eat. Then I would have all the time in the world to make amazing things out of other things that someone put out on the curb or that cost no more than \$5 at Home Depot. I'm creative, right? I'm sure I could dream up a way to hack that Ikea dresser and turn it into, I don't know, a flying car.

Clearly I have issues with time management, as I know that there are countless busy people who still find room in the day for DIY. Even so, I have always regarded most DIY bloggers with suspicion and fear. If you can accomplish genius DIY projects and then actually blog about them, you must be either really sleep-deprived, annoyingly energetic, or a member of another species. And if you are a DIY blogger who also has a beautiful, useful, easy-to-navigate website—well, it takes all of my strength not to turn off my computer and play dead.

But now I have to change my whole worldview. Because it's bad karma to feel suspicious and afraid of two women who DIY a timeworn house into something spectacular, then donate it to charity.

Elsie Larson and Emma Chapman are Missouri sisters whose DIY blog, *A Beautiful Mess*, has an understandably gargantuan following. They also have really good hair. And, as it turns out, very good hearts, as evidenced by their idea to buy a local house, renovate it top to bottom, then hand it over to Habitat for Humanity. They teamed up with *Real Simple*'s home department—passionate DIYers in their own right—who convinced a whopping 29 companies to donate furnishings to make the house complete. The result is beautiful and approachable (no flying cars here—instead, an easy pot pegboard). And it's far from a mess. Just turn to page 142 to see what I mean.

And so, as life often requires, it seems I must adjust my thinking. DIY projects are not to be feared but admired. Particularly if the do-it-yourself is really doable—and it benefits someone else.

*Kristin van Orman*



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# Your Words

**Q.**  
What DIY project are you most proud of?

**A.**

**Fixing a leaky faucet (and a broken heart).**

When I became a widow in my early 60s, after 35 years of marriage, I had a steep learning curve in home maintenance. My husband was a Mr. Fix-It, so I had to prove some things to myself. For example, when the bathroom faucet started to drip, I had two choices: Call the plumber, or repair it myself. I chose the latter.

After three trips to the hardware store, five hours of frustration, and at least 25 viewings of YouTube videos, I rejoiced over no more drips. Plus, I've decided that plumbing and widowhood have something in common—they both require patience and tools.

ANN HUFFMAN, Rock River, Ohio

**Beekeeping in my own backyard.**

**I've always been fascinated by honeybees, so I decided to go to bee school. For nine weeks, I studied hive construction, bee history and health, and honey harvesting, and I even learned how to make honey wine. Two years ago, I put a beehive in my backyard with 40,000 bees. I added another last year. Today each colony has more than 60,000 bees. This hobby enriches my life, is good for the environment, and makes enough honey to share with friends.**

MARJORIE GIANNELLI, Ipswich, Massachusetts



**I painted the entire outside of my house. The. Entire. Outside!!!**  
CAROL COLEMAN,  
Stockton, California



**I made a bench out of wooden pallets for outside my front door. You can actually sit on it!**

DEBBIE CANTRICK HOLMES,  
Cape Coral, Florida

**Anything done with my dad.**

When I was 19 and my summer job didn't pan out, my dad hired me to work around the house. I built a back fence for our property that tested every carpentry skill he taught me, which is how we bonded—by working with wood together. That fall, when I left for school, I had a stocked toolbox, a stronger relationship with my dad, and the knowledge that I'm much better at math than I thought! Plus, the fence is still standing 17 years later.

ARIANNA NOONAN,  
Reading, Massachusetts

Illustration by Ben Wiseman



**Redecorating our 1960s camper: I made curtains and re-covered the cushions with Stitch Witchery, hot glue, and a staple gun.**

CATE BALDRIDGE KONICEK,  
Cedar Rapids, Iowa

### Scrapbooking.

I created—and update—40 or so family scrapbooks. There's nothing better than reliving memories of birthdays, park trips, and everyday life. My boys are in college now, but it takes me only a moment to grab a book.

VIRGINIA M. LINCOLN,  
Glen Rock, New Jersey

### Building a wall.

**One summer, I built a retaining wall using stones my neighbors gave away. I dug the footings, mixed concrete in a used cement mixer that my ever-so-romantic husband bought for me, then cemented each rock in place. It was a tedious and strenuous task, as the wall is 100 feet long and a few feet high. But it's beautiful, functional, and permanent (it survived the 1992 Landers, California, earthquake), unlike most of my other household projects!**

MARILYN SWEITZER, Salem, Missouri



**Making homemade baby food and wipes for my twins.**

MAUREEN HEILER,  
Jackson, Mississippi

### A "song" for my son.

WHEN I WAS PREGNANT WITH MY FIRST SON, I MAILED FAMILY MEMBERS SOME SMALL WOODEN CIRCLES, ICE-POP STICKS, AND ACRYLIC PAINTS AND ASKED THEM TO CREATE ART FOR HIM. I PAINTED THREE 18-BY-24-INCH STRETCH CANVASES AND MADE A MUSIC STAFF USING RIBBON AND A TREBLE CLEF. I THEN MADE A "SONG" USING EACH PIECE OF ART AS A SEPARATE MUSIC NOTE. MY SON IS NOW SIX, BUT IT STILL HANGS IN HIS ROOM AS A REMINDER OF ALL WHO LOVE HIM.

REBECCA RUID, Williston, Vermont

### SUBSCRIBER OF THE MONTH



### YOLANDA SUE GRUWELL

**HER ANSWER:** **My garden, which went from one-third acre of nothing but dirt and rocks to five raised wooden beds and a small greenhouse to start plants from seeds. Now I grow grapes, asparagus, strawberries, tomatoes, cukes, squash, beans, peas, peppers, okra, and potatoes—to name a few things. I even have more than 60 climbing rose bushes! We do everything ourselves—moving rocks, shoveling, tilling, planting, weeding, and harvesting. It's worth it because it keeps us active and tastes good, too.**

**STATS:** 69; married, with one grown daughter; retired; Dunnigan, California.

#### WHAT IS YOUR BEST GARDENING SKILL?

I'm not afraid to try new techniques, which is something I learned from my dad. He taught me to put Epsom salt in my holes as I planted tomatoes and to mulch my heart out to keep water in and weeds away.

#### WHAT PRODUCT COULDN'T YOU LIVE WITHOUT?

Extra-virgin olive oil. I also have almost any spice you can think of (alphabetically stored, of course), and I collect a lot of vinegars. If you don't have the ingredients you need to make something when you live in the country, you need to improvise.

#### WHAT'S THE MOST DARING THING YOU'VE EVER DONE?

One time, I was strapped into a hang glider at the Los Angeles County Fair, and I loved it. I wanted to do the same thing off the cliff in San Pedro, California, but the hubby said no. He said he loved me too much to take the chance of my falling in the ocean.



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Making our dining-room  
table with my husband.  
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### A retrofitted dollhouse.

**For our daughter's fourth birthday, to house her growing doll collection, my husband and I converted her 36-by-28-inch bookcase into a dollhouse. I used scrapbook paper for the walls and spray adhesive for the mirrors, frames, and carpeting. My husband helped with the loft and with placing the roof's wooden shingles. She loved her birthday surprise.**

AMY SEUL, West Chicago, Illinois

### Restoring a baptismal gown.

AFTER BEING WORN BY MORE THAN 50 BABIES, MY FAMILY'S 133-YEAR-OLD BAPTISMAL GOWN HAD THINNING FABRIC, AND THE NECK AND ARMHOLES WERE TOO SMALL FOR TODAY'S BABIES. AS I CAREFULLY HAND STITCHED THE "NEW" GOWN OVER THE COURSE OF FOUR MONTHS, I IMAGINED MY ANCESTORS REASSURING ME. I'M PROUD TO SAY THAT I REMADE IT AND A NEW MEMBER OF OUR FAMILY WAS JUST BAPTIZED IN IT.

TONI QUIGLEY, Vero Beach, Florida

### Propping up my wedding cake.

When my husband and I got married last summer, we were on a budget and couldn't afford a huge wedding cake. I painted and decorated stacking hat boxes to elevate the two tiers. Our guests all thought we had four large layers, not realizing that the biggest two on the bottom were actually made of cardboard. Not only did this trick save us hundreds of dollars, but we still had leftover cake!

HOLLY HUFFNAGLE,  
Washington, D.C.



#### UPCOMING QUESTION

**What in your life are you most thankful for?**

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# the Realist

UNCOMMON KNOWLEDGE FOR MODERN TIMES



## THE SECRET LIVES OF FIREFLIES

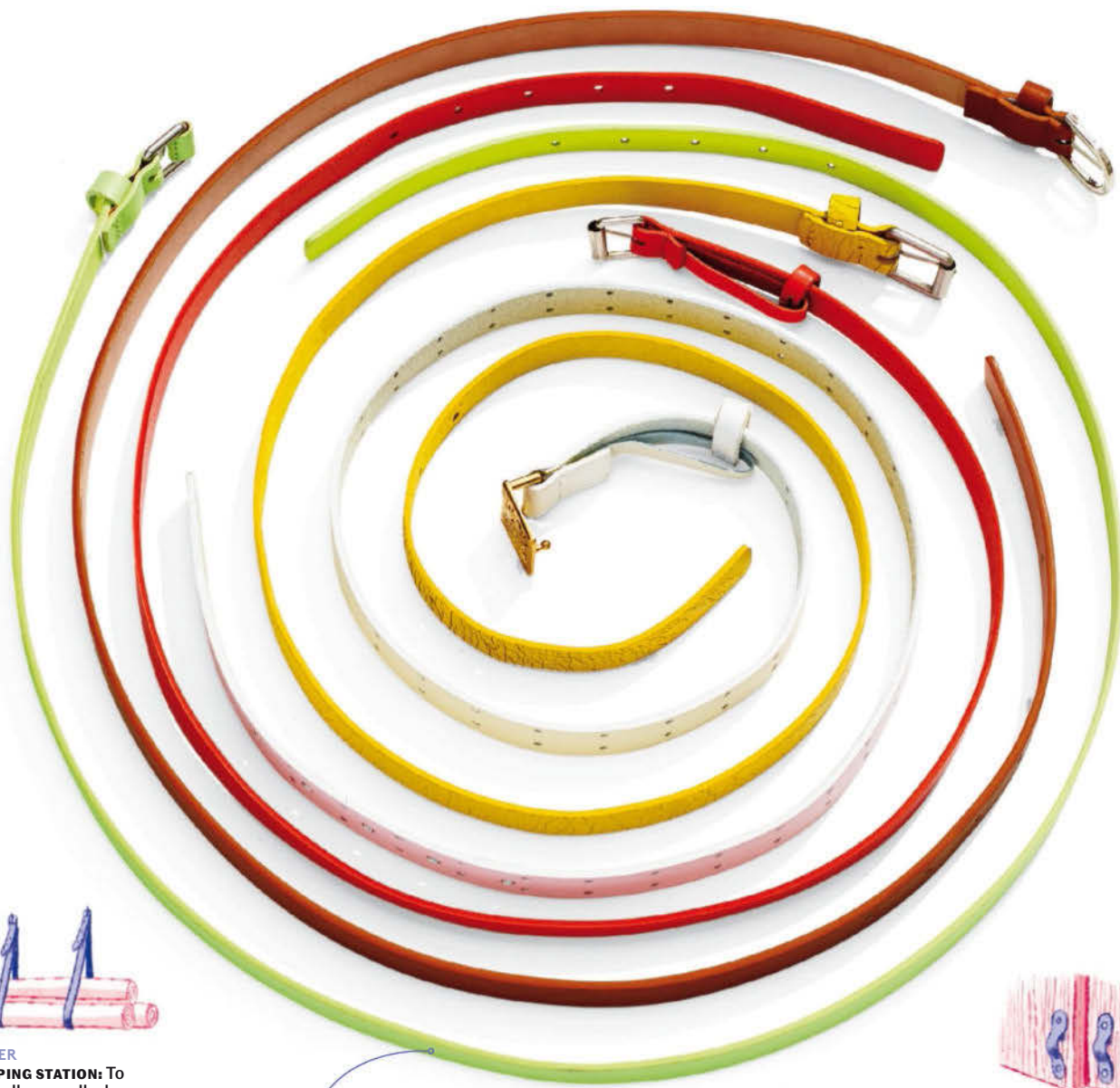
Written by Yolanda Wikel

Photograph by Aaron Dyer

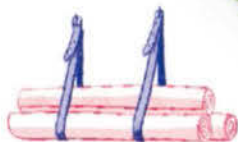
**TALK ABOUT SPARKS FLYING!** The summer-night light shows we enjoy in our backyards are, in fact, courtship communication among fireflies. According to Sara M. Lewis, Ph.D., a professor of biology at Tufts University, the most common firefly (*Photinus pyralis*) uses flashing “kind of like texting.” In the early evening, the males lift off and start twinkling to the females, who are lounging below on blades of grass, surveying their options. “There are far fewer females, so they can be picky,” explains Lewis, who has studied the lives of these insects for 30 years. If a male ignites a female’s interest—the ladies of this genus tend to be into guys with longer (OMG) flashes—she’ll flash back; a sort of luminescent conversation ensues. And if all goes well? Let’s just say, there will be fireworks.

NEW USES FOR OLD THINGS

# BELTS



THE REALIST



## WINNER

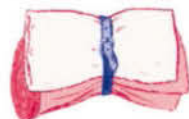
**WRAPPING STATION:** To corral all your rolls, hang two buckled belts on nails about a foot apart so you'll have two loops dangling on the wall. Then slide in tubes of paper through the loops for easy access above a table.

—idea from JACKIE JOINER, Vinemont, Alabama

Photograph by Aaron Dyer

## STAY TUNED FOR MORE CLEVER WINNERS OF OUR 2015 "NEW USES FOR OLD THINGS" CONTEST

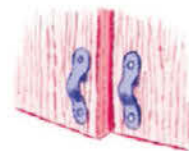
Throughout the year, we'll feature the smartest, most creative ideas straight from RS readers like you.



## RUNNER-UP

**BEDDING BUNDLER:** Strap a belt around a sleeping bag and a pillow so you can send your kid off to a sleepover with an easy-to-carry set. Also works great to compress bulky comforters for compact storage in the off season.

—idea from SUSAN KELLEY, Glen Allen, Virginia

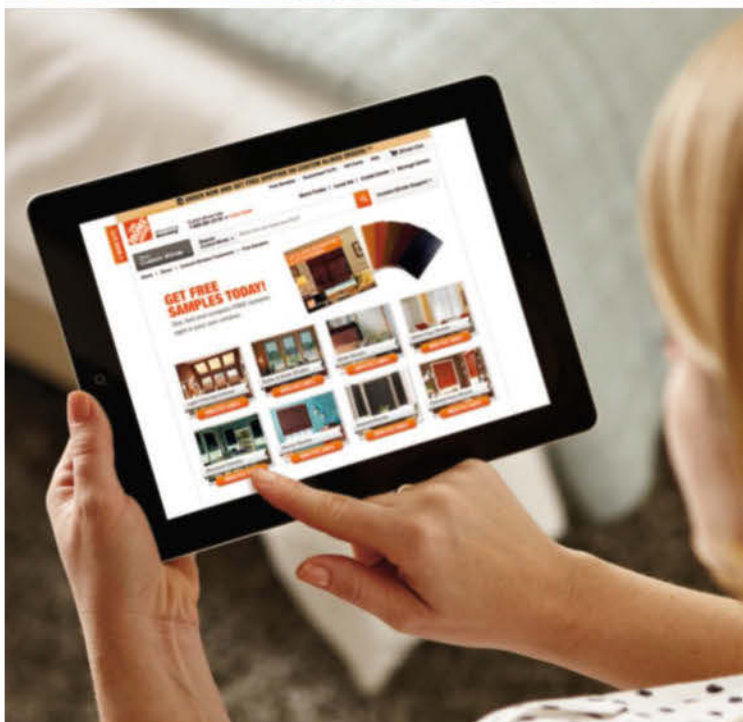


## RUNNER-UP

**CABINET HANDLES:** For a rustic vibe, cut a brown leather belt into lengths of 4 inches. Using a leather punch or a drill, make a hole ½ inch from each end of a handle. Finish the cut edges with brown marker. Attach the handles to cabinet doors with brown shutter screws.

—idea from MELINDA CHASTAGNER, Kent, Washington





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# Now what?!?

## Smart solutions for life's little disasters

**My heat rash is super itchy.**

AMANDA YUE, via e-mail

**THE FIX:** A heat rash occurs when sweat glands are blocked and perspiration gets trapped in the skin. First off, wear loose, breathable clothing, which allows sweat to evaporate, so the rash doesn't worsen, says Rebecca Baxt, a dermatologist in New York City. Apply a 1 percent cortisone cream to the affected area two to three times a day until the rash is gone. To calm the itch, apply cool compresses and Sarna Sensitive Anti-Itch Lotion (\$10, drugstore.com) multiple times a day. (Store the lotion in the refrigerator to make it extra soothing.) Joely Kaufman, a dermatologist in Miami, swears by Simple Soothing Facial Toner (\$7 at drugstores), which can also be used on the body. It contains chamomile and witch hazel, says Kaufman.

**My towels are stiff, even though I have soft water.**

B. WILKINSON, via e-mail

**THE FIX:** WASH TOWELS IN HOT WATER WITH ONLY THE RECOMMENDED AMOUNT OF DETERGENT, AND SKIP THE LIQUID FABRIC SOFTENER, SAYS MARY MARLOWE LEVERETTE, THE LAUNDRY EXPERT FOR ABOUT.COM; THE ROUGHNESS COULD BE FROM DETERGENT RESIDUE. STILL NOT SOFT? ADD A CUP OF DISTILLED WHITE VINEGAR TO THE RINSE CYCLE NEXT TIME. IT CAN BREAK DOWN LEFTOVER GUNK.

**I'm recovering from an ear infection, but I'm flying tomorrow.**

SARAH M., via e-mail

**THE FIX:** You need to follow a three-step remedy. An ear infection, along with the sudden change of pressure during a flight, can be painful because they both hinder proper drainage, says Darius Kohan, M.D., the chief of otology and neurotology at Lenox Hill Hospital, in New York City. He suggests: (1) If you have normal blood pressure, take a decongestant (like Sudafed) and use a spray (like Afrin) an hour before takeoff and six hours later, if you're still in the air. (2) Before takeoff and during ascent and descent, wear earplugs designed to prevent pressure from building up quickly (\$9, earplanes.com). (3) Chew gum during takeoff and landing. This will cause you to produce and swallow more saliva, opening the eustachian tubes in your ears that allow drainage.

Written by  
Andra Chantim  
Illustration by  
Peter Oumanski



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## THE STAPLE

# SARDINES

Canned sardines are packed to the gills with goodness. The tiny nutritional powerhouses contain essential vitamins, minerals, protein, and omega-3 fatty acids. But an even bigger lure? Their rich flavor helps you create great meals in minutes. (No worries, you can eat the bones!) Buy whole fillets packed in extra-virgin olive oil for the most delicious tinned fish.

Recipes by Kay Chun

Photograph by Aaron Dyer

### REAL SIMPLE'S

#### FAVORITE BRANDS

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### 3 QUICK IDEAS

#### RECIPE

#### Sardine spaghetti

HANDS-ON TIME **15 MINUTES**

TOTAL TIME **25 MINUTES**

SERVES **4**

Cook  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup panko in 2 tablespoons olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat, stirring, until golden. Transfer to a bowl; stir in  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup chopped fresh dill. Cook 3 each anchovies and sliced garlic cloves in 2 tablespoons olive oil over medium heat, stirring, until fragrant. Toss in the sardines from 2 ( $4\frac{1}{4}$ -ounce) cans, 12 ounces cooked spaghetti, 1 tablespoon lemon juice, 1 teaspoon crushed red pepper, and salt and black pepper. Top with the panko.

#### EASY UPGRADE

#### Sardine banh mi

Spread the bottom half of a hoagie roll with liverwurst and the top half with mayonnaise. Sandwich with sardines, lime juice, sliced sour pickles and fresh hot chilies, shredded carrots, and cilantro, basil, and mint.

#### EASY UPGRADE

#### Sardine rye toast

Mix equal parts salted butter and chopped scallions. Spread on rye toast. Top with sardines, sliced radishes and scallions, lemon juice, olive oil, and black pepper.



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# Burglarproof your house

Is your home an easy target? Paul Cromwell, Ph.D., a professor of public affairs at the University of South Florida, in Tampa, interviewed burglars about their techniques for a book he cowrote called *Breaking and Entering*. Here, he reveals what can attract—and how to deter—thieves.

Written by Kaitlyn Pirie  
Illustration by Peter Oumanski



## Describe the typical burglar.

My research shows most are between the ages of 15 and 24 and live within a mile or two of their targets. Many scope out homes beforehand. To get intel, some even pair up with service people whose occupations can give them access to a house. The two may not work together on an ongoing basis, but they may share spoils of a job. Be aware of everyone who comes to your home—it doesn't hurt to be a little suspicious.

## Are certain types of houses less likely to be broken into than others?

The homes that tend to be safer are the ones that are in culs-de-sac (the layout prevents an easy getaway) and those located on street corners (more visibility and passersby). And it's not necessarily true that prowlers will stay away from a property if it's obvious that a dog lives there. But a barking dog can help draw attention to a burglary.

## Any other ways to decrease your home's chances of being a target?

Keep landscaping low around doors and windows so as not to provide cover for

people trying to figure out how to get in.

## How quickly does a break-in happen?

Burglars want to be in and out of a house within five to seven minutes. They run through the house and in less than a minute figure out where the good stuff is. Generally they go to the master bedroom first—that's where jewelry and cash are apt to be. Offices are also hot spots because of computer equipment.

## In your book, you warn about repeat offenders.

If you've been burglarized once, there is reason to worry. There's about a 30 percent chance you'll fall

victim again within a few months. According to the studies I've conducted, thieves assume you'll have new stuff by then, plus they already know how to get in. Figure out how they got in, and address the issue.

## What about an alarm?

Yes, have one installed and flaunt it with a sign on the lawn or in a window.

## What are some overlooked entry points?

Get rid of pet doors. A burglar could send a child through a dog door to unlock the main door. Also, keep the garage door closed, and lock the entrance between the garage and the house.

## Talk to us about locks.

On all your doors, put dead bolts that go into the door frame 1½ inches. As for sliding doors, don't prop a broomstick in the track in the hope that it will prevent the door from sliding. Burglars can still lift the door off its track. You're better off installing a lock that goes through the doorframe. Your windows are fine with standard locks, but avoid burglar bars, as they can be a fire hazard.

## How safe is a safe?

It can prevent petty theft—say, a repairman is in your home and you want to lock up pricey items. But regarding burglary, it's not that useful if the safe is light enough for someone to pick it up and walk off with your belongings inside. Buy a fireproof model, the heaviest possible, and consider bolting it to the floor. If you're going on vacation, the best thing to do is put valuables in a bank safe deposit box.

## Tell us more about prepping the house before leaving on vacation.

Create an "illusion of occupancy." Enlist a neighbor to park his car in your driveway at night, bring the garbage can to and from the curb (make sure there's trash in there), and shovel the driveway if it snows. Also smart: Mow the lawn so it doesn't get overgrown, and have newspaper and mail delivery put on hold. Install outdoor motion-sensor lights, and put a couple of indoor lights on timers so the house is lit from dusk until 11 P.M. For insurance purposes, keep documentation of all your belongings.

## Final thoughts?

Don't advertise on social media that you're on vacation. You're essentially telling the world that you're leaving the house unattended. Wait until after your trip to post about your getaway.



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# Fragrance sensitivity

Pounding headaches, itchy rashes...do perfumes cause you more pain than pleasure? Here, solutions so you can spritz without the symptoms.

THE REALIST



**EAU NO**  
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fragrance faux  
pas at [realsimple.com/eauno](http://realsimple.com/eauno).

## What causes the reactions in the first place?

"Most fragrances and scented products are formulated using a cocktail of naturally derived and synthetic ingredients," says Ron Robinson, a cosmetic chemist and the founder of Beauty Stat.com, a cosmetics resource site. "Often people blame the overall blend for whatever reaction they are experiencing when the actual culprit could be a single ingredient, like one fragrance or a preservative that may or may not have a scent," says Pamela Dalton, Ph.D., an expert in olfactory research at the Monell Chemical Senses Center, in Philadelphia. The good news? You don't have to swear off fragrances completely. "Many people are able to find options that don't include the offending ingredient," says Dalton. The not-so-good news? It will take some trial-and-error to pinpoint what's causing your reaction.

## If you get a skin rash

"Dab an over-the-counter cortisone ointment on the area twice daily until the irritation subsides," says Joshua Zeichner, M.D., the director of cosmetic and clinical research in dermatology at Mount Sinai Hospital, in New York City. Although natural fragrances may seem like a safer bet, "they are just as likely to cause a reaction as their synthetic counterparts," says Dalton. To identify the cause properly, see a dermatologist for a skin patch test.

## If you experience headaches

It's the concentration of the scent that can lead to a pounding head. "If it's too overpowering, it can cause physical symptoms, just like bright lights or loud noises can," says Dalton. Try swapping eau de parfum for a lighter eau de toilette or body splash. Or opt for a line that specializes in single-note fragrances. "The fewer the ingredients, the less likely you are to get symptoms," says Robinson.

**Written by**  
Jenny Jin

**Photograph by**  
Yasu + Junko



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# Sanity-saving preflight checklist

Whatever your final destination may be, here's what you can do before you board the plane to make that trip more seamless.

## AT HOME

### ○ STAY UP-TO-THE-MINUTE.

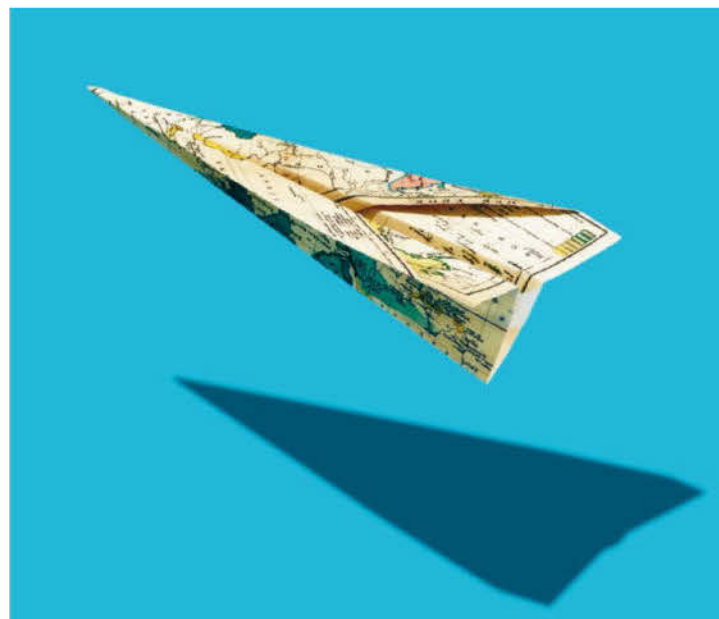
Don't depend on your airline to let you know when there's a delay. Sign up for text and e-mail alerts with an online flight-tracking service, such as **FlightStats** (free, Android, iOS). Or manage your itinerary with **Triplt Pro** (\$49 a year, Android, iOS), which comes with flight alerts.

### ○ BUY SOME PEACE OF MIND.

Worried that a flight delay or cancellation will ruin a vacation? Berkshire Hathaway's **AirCare** insurance (\$34, [bhhttp.com](http://bhhttp.com)) will reimburse you \$50 for a delay of more than two hours, \$100 if you miss a connection due to a delay, and \$500 if your bag goes missing for more than 12 hours. The company tracks flight status automatically and issues payments directly to a PayPal account or a debit card.

### ○ SCORE A PRIME SEAT.

Don't want to pay extra for premium economy, and you're not into ponying up for a prime aisle seat ahead of time? Then sign up with **ExpertFlyer.com**, which alerts you when your seat of choice becomes free, so you can log on and



grab it. Use the cabin maps at **SeatGuru.com** to help you pick.

○ **SYNC UP WITH THE TIME ZONE.** Jettison jet lag by following the personalized schedule for your itinerary at **StopJetLag.com**. You'll get an hour-by-hour plan that includes when to eat, rest, exercise, and get sun exposure so you'll be right in step with your destination's local time.

○ **GET FAST-TRACKED.** If you haven't already, sign up for **TSA PreCheck** (\$85 for five years, [tsa.gov](http://tsa.gov)), which will expedite you through security in more than 150 U.S. airports. Better yet, become a member of U.S. Customs and Border Protection's **Global Entry** program (\$100 for five years, [cbp.gov](http://cbp.gov)) and you'll get PreCheck and the ability to zip through U.S. customs.

○ **CHECK THAT YOUR CARRY-ON IS REALLY A CARRY-ON.** Some domestic carriers have started enforcing a 22-by-14-by-9-inch size limit, which not all bags advertised as carry-ons meet. To avoid gate checking (and paying) for a bag, go to the airline's site to find out size restrictions before you

leave. For regulation-size carry-ons, try **Tumi.com** and **Travelpro.com**.

○ **SIZE UP TOILETRIES.** Limit liquids, gels, and aerosols to 3.4 ounces or less and place them in a one-quart clear plastic zip-top bag in your carry-on. For perfectly sized portions, head to **3froz.com** to find TSA-approved minis of more than 60 brands.

○ **DRESS SMART.** To move through airports with ease and emerge from a

flight unrumpled, stick with wrinkle-free fabrics, such as knits, jersey, and stretch denim. A cashmere wrap or sweater is invaluable in an over-air-conditioned cabin. And a comfortable pair of slip-ons will help you speed through security.

## AT THE AIRPORT

### ○ KNOW YOUR WAY AROUND.

**GateGuru** (free, Android, iOS) helps you navigate terminals at more than 225 airports around the world and points you wherever you need to go. Handy on a layover, the app also lists airport amenities and restaurant reviews.

### ○ STAY CONNECTED. A Boingo

account (from \$5 a month) keeps you online at more than 30 domestic airports (and more than 1 million hot spots across the globe). If you set up a profile with the hot-spot provider's new Passpoint Secure service, you'll get even faster secure connections at a growing number of airports. (Tip: American Express Platinum cardholders are eligible for free accounts.)

○ **JOIN THE CLUB.** Dealing with a long layover or an extended delay? You can get a day pass to a lounge for \$25 to \$50, which can pay for itself in free Wi-Fi and food. Or consider a membership to an independent club, like **Priority Pass** (\$99 a year, [prioritypass.com](http://prioritypass.com)), which has more than 700 lounges around the world.

Photograph by  
Aaron Dyer



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# TREND TO TRY

# Safari

While the trend isn't exactly trailblazing (it tends to make a comeback every year), it's still a roaring good choice for late summer and early fall.

**5 WILD THINGS NECKLACE**  
This multihorned wonder makes a basic shift look daring. \$59, luckybrand.com.

**6 BEADED BANGLES**  
Evoke faraway places with an armful of desert tones. \$25 each, rjgraziano.com.

**7 DRESS THAT ADAPTS**  
The exotic pattern can easily migrate from summer into fall with black tights. Adrianna Papell, \$160, nordstrom.com.

Written by  
Yolanda Wikel

Photographs by  
Philip Friedman

THE REALIST



**1 UTILITY VEST**  
Like a jean jacket, this layer can go casual (with a tank and shorts) or dressy (with a blouse and black pants). Kut From the Kloth, \$68, zappos.com.

**2 GIRAFFE CLUTCH**  
More surprising than leopard print, but no less fierce—or versatile. \$198, henribendel.com.

**3 WAYFARER BLOUSE**  
Great for traveling in summer heat, this flowy top is made of comfortable cotton. Corey by Corey Lynn Calter, \$149, thisiscorey.com.

**4 TRIBAL T-STRAPS**  
Printed pumps ensure that you won't blend in with the herd. Maiden Lane for Gilt, \$99, gilt.com.





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# Little Helpers

4 ingenious products to make your day easier



## 1 STICK-ANYWHERE IPHONE CASE

For “Look, Ma, no hands!” ease, this cover has tiny suction cups so you can affix a phone to a kitchen cabinet for a cooking tutorial or on the dashboard when you’re using navigation. Zero-G Anti Gravity case, \$50, megatinycorp.

**3 STAIN-BLOCKING SHIRT**  
Go ahead and dig in to the messiest barbecue on offer. This machine-washable white tee is specially treated so water- and oil-based liquids roll right off. Elizabeth & Clarke shirt, \$25, unstainable.ec.

Written by  
Tanya Christian  
Photographs by  
Philip Friedman



**2 FLOATING DRINK STAND**  
Ever fantasize that your pool had a swim-up bar? It's not so far-fetched. With five cupholders and a seven-foot UV-protective umbrella, this shady outpost is stable enough to withstand wind gusts and cannonballs. Pool Buoy, \$250, mypoolbuoy.com.



**4 DIGITAL TAPE MEASURE**  
This clever assistant goes the extra distance, calculating midpoints and memorizing your readings so you can take the guesswork out of handiwork. eTape16, \$30, thegrommet.com.



## Eco quandary SHOULD I UNPLUG ELECTRONICS WHEN THEY'RE NOT IN USE?

Focus on the electronics in your office and entertainment center (game consoles, desktop computers, printers, scanners, etc.) because they still draw power even when they're turned off. This is called standby power, which makes up almost 10 percent of electricity use in a typical American home, according to the U.S. Department of Energy. Plug all nearby electronics into a power strip that you can easily flip off. If you do this with the specific devices mentioned above, you'll save significant energy, says Alan Meier, Ph.D., a senior scientist at the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, in Berkeley, California.

As for tracking down other standby-power vampires in your home? Here's a trick: Feel the power supply (the back of a unit or a box attached to the cord). A warm-to-the-touch power supply is a good clue that the device is drawing—and possibly wasting—electricity. For an itemized report of how much energy all your appliances and devices are sucking up, invest in a Smappee sensor (\$249, smappee.com), which connects to an app on your phone to monitor energy use.

—KAITLYN PIRIE



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# Life Lessons

GOOD READ



## The diary thief

When she lost her teenage diary at summer camp, *Elizabeth Benedict* feared she was losing part of herself as well. How one petty crime shaped the adult she would become.

AN ORDINARY MOMENT in a 13-year-old girl's life: unpacking a trunk on returning from summer camp. I'm in our Manhattan apartment with my parents and sister, sifting through a season of clothes, when something goes awry. Missing from the stacks of T-shirts and shorts and my copy of *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* are my three small, cloth-covered diaries. It's 1968, a momentous summer for the country. For me, it's the summer the diaries disappeared.

I'd taken so many volumes to camp because I was afraid that if I left them home, my mother would read them. At the artsy camp in the Berkshires, I acted in plays, sang a Schubert mass, and befriended several brainy New York City kids whom I promised to see once we were home. I had a few crushes, and one of the New Yorkers had a crush on me, but he

Photograph by Chris Craymer

ended up with another girl. None of this was remotely on my mind when I discovered the diaries were gone. I begged my parents to call the camp owners and search the wooden teepee where I'd spent the last two months.

No sign of them. I hadn't noticed them missing when I packed, but here at home, about to hide them under my mattress, their absence was as loud as a gong. The loss reverberated inside me because it had nothing outside to attach itself to. How could they have just vanished on the trip home?

Months later, I got a letter from the camper who'd liked me with news about the girl he'd taken up with: "She told me that she took some diaries from your teepee in order to defame you, but I never believed her." I shook with relief and mortification. What had she told him? That I made out with Jeff S. on Thanksgiving? That I loved shopping in Bloomingdale's teen department? I was terrified to ask, and soon I was busy trying to get the books back from this girl who'd believed that I was such a towering threat that she had to destroy me. But how had she known about my secret diaries? She must have sneaked into my teepee when no one was there, rummaged through my belongings for any old thing to steal—and hit this jackpot.

I found the camp directory and phoned her house in New Jersey dozens of times. We were a New York City family without a car, and that's the only reason,

looking back, why my parents didn't drive out there and demand the stolen goods. For weeks, she would answer the phone and hang up on me. Then there was nothing to do but give up. My father was decidedly not—though I can see now the advantages it could have brought—Tony Soprano.

I never did find out what the Diary Thief told the boy she'd wanted to woo, but it must not have been too damaging, because he became my boyfriend for the next year. I got the guy but was so traumatized that I stopped keeping a diary for years. That changed in college, the day that a literature professor told me, based on a personal term paper I'd written, that I wanted to write a novel, which I hadn't known before. That night, I put a fresh piece of paper into my typewriter and wrote, "If I keep writing in this every day, it will even-

tually turn into fiction." I don't know how I knew that. I hadn't grown up among writers, and pronouncements on the writing life were not in the air the way they are today. I suppose it was merely my fondest wish. The surprise is that it turned out to be right.

My first novel, *Slow Dancing*, was not the predictable coming-of-age story, but my second book dealt with the partially invented childhood of a girl named Esme, growing up in 1960s Manhattan. I gave Esme an elegant, theatrical mother modeled on a family friend whom I'd adored as a child. When Esme turned 12 in the writing process, I was stumped about how she'd think and express herself, and I remembered the diaries. I yearned all over again to learn what was in them, but this time it was for professional reasons. Yet it was not hard to experience all I'd felt when I delved again into the theft: my anger, humiliation, fear of exposure, and powerlessness.

In this nearly hallucinatory state of writer's desperation combined with a fantasy that I might once and for all get the diaries back, I phoned a friend who was an investigative reporter and told him I wanted to track down the Thief. I knew from a camp directory that she had moved to Boston at some point and changed her name. He called back in five minutes with her phone number and a script.

When she answered the phone, I said the childhood name by which she knew me, and then, "I want my diaries back." There were a few seconds in which she must have been doing cartwheels into her past, looking for the antecedent. *Who?* She said nothing and hung up. I called my friend back. What do I do now? Mail her a \$5 bill and a letter imploring her to return the diaries. A week later, she sent back the money and a note: "The diaries were lost or destroyed many years ago." She was sorry that I was still so obsessed. I seethed all over again. I was not

**When she answered the phone, I said, "I want my diaries back." There were a few seconds in which she must have been doing cartwheels into her past. Who? But she said nothing and hung up.**



#### About the author

Elizabeth Benedict is the author of five novels and the editor of three anthologies, including the forthcoming *Me, My Hair, and I: Twentyseven Women Untangle an Obsession*.



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**This is about  
being a writer.  
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my research—  
you took  
my material.  
That is the  
charge today,  
Little Miss  
Diary Thief.**

obsessed with the diaries anymore—hundreds of pages of my 11- and 12- and 13-year-old self. I wanted to say, *This is about being a writer. You stole my research—you took my material. That is the charge today, Little Miss Diary Thief.*

I managed to write 12-year-old Esme without my *aide-mémoire*, and quite a few more novels and other books after that. But it was a book I didn't write that recently brought back the Diary Thief and that distant summer. In 2013, Meg Wolitzer published a wonderful novel called *The Interestings* about a group of kids who meet at an artsy summer camp in the mountains. From interviews, I learned that we had gone to the same camp, but her novel was set six years after my time there. The campers live in teepees, they excel or don't at creative arts, and they give themselves a name befitting their sense of themselves, the Interestings. They stay in touch all their lives, as I did with my own group of Interestings. In the novel, some prosper, some struggle, some fade away. Art triumphs. Friendship prevails. Everyone learns that life is fragile.

It was impossible to read without the overlay of my own memories: the teepees, the landscape, the crushes. It was a lovely backward glance at our sweet innocence, our fledging ambitions, our teenage longings. As I turned the pages, I half-expected to find the Diary Thief lurking in them, and the diaries themselves, still hidden away in a teepee drawer, unopened by strangers, unstolen, ungone, waiting to be packed in my trunk and taken home. ■

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# Modern Manners

REAL SIMPLE'S ETIQUETTE EXPERT,  
CATHERINE NEWMAN, OFFERS HER BEST ADVICE  
ON YOUR SOCIAL QUANDARIES.

**I recently moved to a city three hours away from my old home. It was a last-minute decision, and unfortunately I wasn't able to say good-bye to several good friends. One in particular was extremely hurt and said so via text. I texted her back a sincere apology and left voice messages with no response. I feel awful, but what else can I do? Is this a friendship I should keep pursuing if I am being ignored?**

S.M.

I think whether or not to keep trying is a question that only you can answer. Do you want to pursue this friendship? Beyond the current awkwardness, is this a person who is truly important to you? After all, you did leave her without saying good-bye, and even if that wasn't necessarily a conscious decision, it's worth examining the relationship. Maybe recent events have made you realize that you're ready to let her go. And if not? Here's my suggestion on how to repair things: Your friend is hurt, so muster as much compassion as you can and show up. Do this literally, at her door, with a heartfelt face-to-face apology. At the very least, send a snail-mail note, which can come across as a more sincere and thoughtful effort than the usual higher-tech routes. Tell her you're sorry and that you hope she'll forgive you. Then, fingers crossed, maybe she will.

## About Catherine

The author of the parenting memoir *Waiting for Birdy*, Catherine Newman has shared her wisdom on matters ranging from family and friends to happiness and pickling in numerous publications. She gets advice from her husband and two opinionated children in Amherst, Massachusetts.



**I live in an apartment, and the woman who lives above me is incredibly noisy. I can identify her by her stomp coming up the stairwell, and she constantly bangs her kitchen cabinets. My weekends are ruined by her incessant thumping and slamming. Is there anything I can do, or is this just one of those grin-and-bear-it situations?**

A.W.

There's plenty you can do, as long as you approach the situation with grace and good humor. Begin by assuming that your neighbor has no idea she's being noisy. Given that the din seems to occur when she's simply retrieving cereal bowls or ascending the staircase, rather than throwing huge parties or allowing her brother's band to rehearse at her place, this is very likely the case. Knock (softly) on her door and explain your experience in the most generous terms you can. "You'd have no way of knowing," you can say, "but sound carries a great deal from your apartment to mine." Describe the specific noises you can hear so that she grasps the scope of the problem. If she seems willing to attend to the issue, great—problem probably solved. If she's baffled, you could try gently brainstorming solutions with her (putting down an area rug, what have you). If she's unresponsive, you can discuss the building's policies with your landlord. If you rent, check your lease. Some leases have noise guidelines. Some buildings note quiet hours, although they tend to focus on parties rather

than basic kitchen prep. Make that a last resort, though. You would probably do better investing in noise-canceling headphones than having a (noisily) resentful neighbor.

**I truly enjoy cooking. My family enjoys my food, and my husband brags about it to friends and family. That being said, in the three years that we've been married, my mother-in-law has never tasted my food. She lives out of town, so when she visits, I let her cook old favorites for my husband and us. On the days that she does not cook, I prepare dinner, and she says either that she is not hungry or will eat later. It happens every visit. My husband and I joke about it, but I'm wondering: Is it OK to ask my mother-in-law why she never eats my food? Or should I keep the peace by not saying anything? We do have a fairly close relationship where we can be open and honest.**  
D. I.

I'm no psychologist, but this is kind of a Freudian doozy. It sounds as if she has some issue, conscious or not, with your usurping her role of feeding her son. I wouldn't touch that with a 10-foot spatula were it not for the surprise ending of your question—you and your mother-in-law are actually close! If your relationship is truly open and honest, say something. Try complete transparency (“Am I right to notice that you never eat any of the food I make? Why is that?”), a less direct comment (“You don't seem to eat the meals I cook, and I'm worried you have a dietary issue I don't know about”), or even slight humor (“You do know that I'm not trying to poison you, right?”). Maybe she wants you to notice and will be relieved you've asked. And maybe you can explain to her, in the most caring terms, what's at stake: “I love to feed your son, and I know you do, too. It's something we

have in common. But it would mean so much if you would let me feed you, too.”

**How can I respond to a family friend who constantly belittles my adult daughter's choice of sexy clothes and my adult son's baggy pants? I want to tell him off, but I don't want to stoop to his level.**

J. F.

How about: “So I should cancel the chaps I ordered for your birthday?” If you want to go deeper but stay playful, you can bring up sartorial choices that horrified your own parents when you all were young. (Flowered bell-bottoms! Braless Fridays!) Then remind him of the basic-tolerance mantra “Different strokes for different folks.” Your children are adults now, and it's not for you to control or judge their appearance. So the kids dress differently from how your friend—or perhaps you yourself—would. Who cares? Remind your friend of the kids' accomplishments, and

encourage him to focus on the people they're becoming rather than on the clothes they're wearing.

**My mother and her two sisters have all passed away. My mother died most recently. She left some gifts for three of my cousins who live nearby. My cousins and I haven't stayed close as we've grown up. I have called and e-mailed, saying I would like to see them. It's not as if I'm holding these gifts as a “prize” for showing up. It's been 18 months with no success. I could just mail the items, but I don't feel that honors my mother's wishes. This is emotionally difficult. How can I get it done?**

L. J.

Grief is hard enough to bear as it is, but it also tends to amplify slights. Perhaps you were accustomed to the distance between you and your cousins. But now, in the wake of loss, it's painful—and that's exacerbated by their lack of response to your efforts. Reach out again and be direct: “I would love to see you. Now that the three sisters have died, it feels important to stay connected. Also, my mother left you a

few things that I would like to give you in person.” If they still don't respond? Pop the items in the mail and be done with it for now. Maybe the gifts will prompt a reconnection.

**How do you politely ask guests not to use your nice, decorative bathroom towels when there are other hand towels put out to use? They don't seem to get it.**

L. B.

Well, you can't laminate them. And while it may seem obvious to you that certain towels are off limits, I'll admit that I wasn't entirely familiar with the idea—and perhaps I'm not alone. I get slapping your children's muddy hands away from them or rolling your eyes when your husband grabs one to wipe up spaghetti sauce. But dinner guests are probably going to assume that a towel hanging in a bathroom is there to be used. So I'm going to invoke one of my most basic etiquette rules—the one I use for dropped wineglasses and busted cane chair seats—and it's this: *People are more important than stuff.* You can't chide your guests or proscribe their hand drying. The only solution is to hide the towels away or toss them in the laundry every now and then.

#### HAVE AN ETIQUETTE QUESTION?

Submit your social conundrums to Catherine at [REALSIMPLE.COM/MODERNMANNERS](http://REALSIMPLE.COM/MODERNMANNERS). Selected letters will be featured on these pages each month.





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## 5 ways to handle jealousy

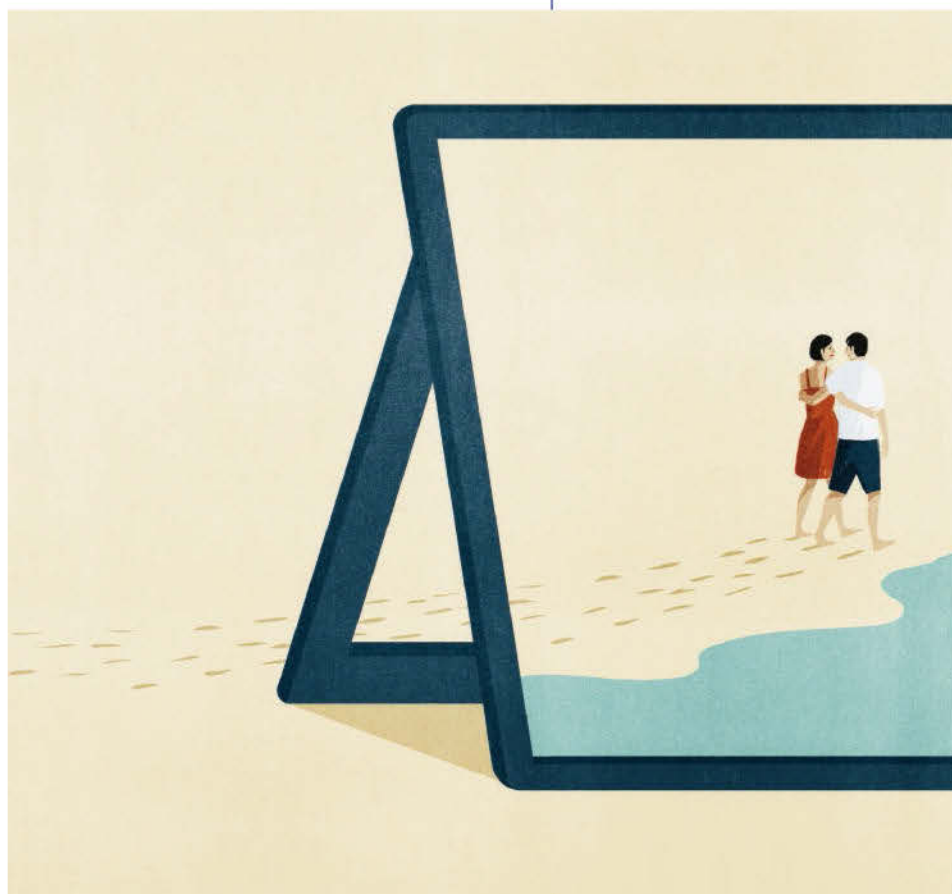
Your best friend makes more money. Your sister has the faster metabolism. And *everyone* takes better vacations (at least according to Instagram). Don't sit and seethe. Turn envy into opportunity with one of these tactics.

# 1

KRISTY WALLACE  
**Be a copycat.**

I have a friend who's going to travel in South America for a year. When she told me, I immediately thought, *I'm so jealous. How do I get to go on a trip like that?* Use that feeling,

and follow your friend's example. It doesn't have to be the whole shebang. Maybe you walk into someone's house and you're jealous of her great kitchen. So you can't do a whole renovation, but you can certainly update or change something that will make you happy. I can't travel abroad for a year. But I can take a similar, smaller step. After my friend's announcement, my husband and I decided to go to Mexico. We had been talking about it, and my friend's news pushed us to say, "Screw it—let's just go."



Written by Rebecca Webber  
Illustration by Shout

## 2

MAI-LY NGUYEN STEERS

**Practice gratitude on social media.**

Comparing yourself to others isn't new, but Facebook and other social-media platforms have certainly made it easier. A study I coauthored found that the longer people spend on Facebook, the more likely they are to experience depressive symptoms. They also might become more jealous, due to personal insecurities. Part of that comes from how you are using social media—say, if you're comparing yourself to idealized versions of your friends. Someone else is always going to appear better than you. So reevaluate. Research suggests that an antidote to social comparison is gratitude. Try some "Today I'm grateful for" posts. It might change your perspective and help you react differently to others.

**KRISTY WALLACE** is the chief operating officer of the Ellevest Network, which connects professional women around the world. She lives in Brooklyn.

3

SHARI SEVIER

**Focus on your strengths.**

**So often insecurity is what's behind jealousy—the fear of “I’m not good enough.” You need to examine those insecurities in an objective manner. If you’re jealous of someone else’s vacation photos, I would say, “Where are you feeling that you don’t measure up?” Maybe it’s that you can’t afford that type of trip. So let’s look at what you are able to do, the good things in your life. Maybe you have amazing hobbies. You’re great at decorating. Rejoice in the good. I always say to people I counsel, “You hold all of the power to not feel this way.”**

**MAI-LY NGUYEN STEERS, PH.D.**, is a social-psychology researcher at the University of Houston and a coauthor of a study on the psychological effects of Facebook. She lives in Houston.

**SHARI SEVIER, PH.D.**, is the chair of the board of directors of the American School Counselor Association and a counselor at Lafayette High School in Wildwood, Missouri. She lives in Ellisville, Missouri.

## 4

EMILIANA SIMON-THOMAS

**Wallow—briefly—then move on.**

Negative states, like jealousy, anger, and hostility, need to be short-lived. It's OK to feel them—that's natural. But you can't let them dictate the next three hours. In the end, being positive is a better deal for you. That emotion, not negativity, will get you where you want to be. So feel annoyed or irritated, but then take a deep breath and let it go. It's not easy, especially when you don't like the person you're jealous of. You have to work up to it. Talk to yourself the way a friend would. She wouldn't say, "Yeah, you're right. You suck." She would say, "You're smart and capable, and things will come together in another way for you."

**EMILIANA SIMON-THOMAS, PH.D.**, is the science director of the Greater Good Science Center at the University of California, Berkeley. She lives in Berkeley.

## 5

SHERYL UNDERWOOD

**Don't hate, congratulate!**

As a stand-up comic, I was often jealous of other female comedians' success. I thought, *Why am I not on the road? Why am I not in the sitcom? Why am I not winning the awards or making the money?* Then I let it go and started applauding them and saying, "If they can get it, I can get it, too." Jealousy can leave you stuck on stupid instead of being a nice person. Once I started to congratulate, I found more success. There's enough for everybody.

**SHERYL UNDERWOOD** is a cohost of *The Talk*, on CBS. She lives in the Los Angeles area.

## THE EXPERTS



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4

# STEPS TO FLAWLESS SKIN



Follow lifestyle blogger **Christine Bibbo Herr** of **NYC Pretty** through her **RoC® Skincare** experience at Real Simple's exclusive Beauty + Balance event in NYC. Finding the perfect beauty routine requires the right skincare products, and RoC® Skincare knows a thing or two about achieving gorgeous skin. Here, Christine shares the RoC®-approved steps to achieving a flawless face.



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Here's a three-minute exercise to help you start the day feeling **centered and energized**. Try it **first thing** in the morning, while you're still in your pajamas: **Stand** with your feet apart, a bit wider than hip-width, and imagine **little springs** in all your joints: ankles, knees, hips, fingers, wrists, elbows, shoulders—all the way up to your jaw. Bounce a bit into these "springs," then begin to **shake your whole body** in a comfortable but **vigorous rhythm**, allowing your shoulders to move up and down, your head to bob, your hands to flap, and your breath to be free. Keep this going for a **whole minute**. When you stop, just **be still** for a moment and feel the natural movement of your breath; notice how alive your body feels. Now sit down on a **comfortable** surface.

With your **jaw relaxed** and your chest and belly soft, take an inhale, feeling the breath flow in, **bathing your body and mind** in refreshing, cleansing energy, then **falling freely** into an exhale. Allow the next inhale to come like a **gentle wave** rising, so there's a nice, soft, **circular feel** to the breath—**no break** between inhale and exhale. Continue this **connected flow** for about two minutes. Then sit for a moment, breathe naturally, and enjoy **being awake** and feeling whole.

### THIS MONTH'S EXPERT

**MARGARET TOWNSEND** is a certified breathwork and Hakomi practitioner in the Portland, Oregon, area. She has taught for 25 years, blending her training in shiatsu, reiki, qigong, yoga, and other disciplines. Find her at [thelivingbreath.com](http://thelivingbreath.com).

Photograph by Helen Norman



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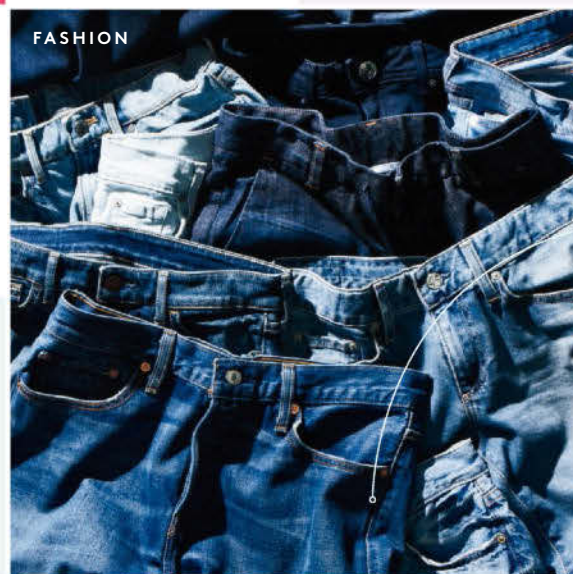
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# 24 FEARLESS



Throw protein-rich snacks in your bag to munch on, like edamame or roasted almonds, to power you through those late afternoon meetings.



Stash yoga gear and hair ties at your desk for an impromptu workout pre or post 9-5.

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Sofia Stays Luminous in Medium Beige.



### Case in point

Housed in slim compacts to protect the bristles, **Sephora Collection Hide and Sleek Skinny Cheek Contour and Foundation Retractable Brushes** (\$16 each, [sephora.com](http://sephora.com)) are plush, precise, and practical for travel. The angled tip makes applying bronzer foolproof; the rounded version blends base seamlessly.

## PRETTY SMART

The latest beauty products and tips that save time, money, and—best of all—your sanity.

Written by Heather Muir  
Photographs by Ralph Smith

## JUST DEW IT

A DRINK OF WATER FOR THIRSTY SUMMER SKIN, **WHAMISA ORGANIC FLOWERS OLIVE LEAF MIST** (\$38, GLOWRECIPE.COM) IS CHOCK-FULL OF POTENT BOTANICALS TO SOOTHE ALL TYPES OF COMPLEXIONS. SPRITZ IT ON AFTER CLEANSING OR APPLYING MAKEUP FOR A PRETTY SHEEN.



## Pickup sticks

These individually wrapped cotton swabs come soaked in olive oil and act as a magic eraser for eye-makeup smudges or a spot moisturizer for ragged cuticles. **DHC Olive Virgin Oil** (\$6 for 50 swabs, DHCcare.com).



## Main squeeze

Engineered to curl lashes on deep-set and almond-shaped eyes, **Tweezerman ProMaster Lash Curler** (\$22, sephora.com) has a thin, wide top bar to reach every lash and a 38-degree curve (most are 60) to crimp hairs without pinching.



**TIP** Instead of chucking an empty candle jar, stash it in the freezer for a few hours. After the leftover wax hardens, carefully chip it out, then use the container to organize and display makeup brushes, eyeliners, and grooming tools.



## Mass a-peel

Tell chapped lips to kiss off with **Aquareveal Smooth Talker Water Peel for Lips** (\$26, spacenk.com), which uses evening-primrose and vanilla extracts to gently dissolve flakes. Brush on lips, massage, and rinse.



## Neat concept

Without the streaks, stench, or wait time, **St. Tropez Gradual Tan In Shower Lotion** (\$25, ulta.com) makes self-tanning simple. Wash, turn off water, massage cream into wet skin, wait three minutes, then rinse—you're golden.



## Triple threat

At-home manicures just got handier. The **Beauty 360 Ergo Buffer** (\$6, cvs.com) fits snugly in your grip, so it's easy to use all three sides: the gritty exterior for filing, the smooth surface for shaping, and the cushioned lining for a shiny finish.



## Goldilocks

**Klorane Clarify & Shine Rinse** (\$16, klorane.com) contains chamomile to tamp down brassiness and brighten blonds and vinegar to remove dulling mineral deposits, so hair looks glossy (not as if it's been, um, frying in the sun all summer).



## Sponge painting

Dream of highlights but can't commit? **Redken Limited Edition Color Rebel Natural** (\$20, ulta.com) is makeup for hair. Sweep it on dry strands to deposit ink that won't mar clothes and that washes out in three shampoos. In five subtle hues.

REPEAT TWO OR THREE DAYS IN A ROW TO BUILD A CUSTOMIZED BRONZE.



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### Super soaker

The busy woman's body lotion, **Jergens Wet Skin Moisturizer in Refreshing Coconut Oil** (\$7, walmart.com) is instantly absorbed by skin straight out of the shower, for optimal hydration and zero stickiness.



### Double digits

Dip each finger into **Cutex Twister** (\$5, drugstore.com) to remove polish in one fell swoop. Then use the built-in nubby brush to scrape off any stubborn remnants. (Glitter, that means you.)



### In the zone

Dab **Benefit The Pore-fessional License to Blot** (\$20, benefitcosmetics.com) on greasy spots, like the bridge of the nose. It deposits mattifying spheres that sop up oil, so skin stays shine-free.



THIS PLIABLE FORMULA CONTAINS HYALURONIC ACID TO NOURISH LASHES.

### THE HOME STRETCH

MASCARA SKEPTICS, REJOICE! **TOUCH IN SOL STRETCHEX MASCARA** (\$22, sephora.com) HAS LIGHTWEIGHT POLYMERS THAT WRAP AROUND LASHES FOR FULLNESS AND A FLEXIBLE GEL TO LENGTHEN EVEN THOSE STRAIGHT, STUBBY ONES.



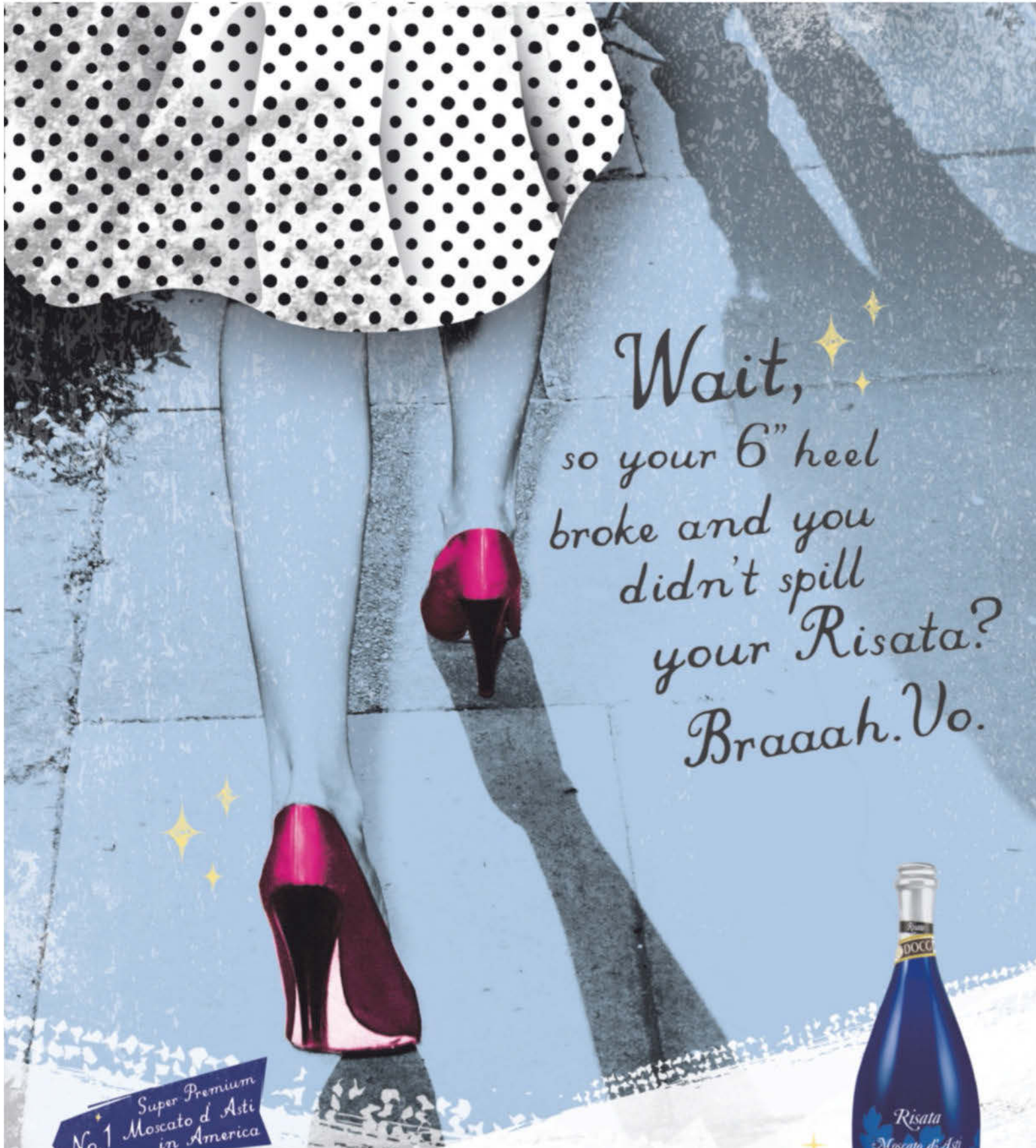
### BULL'S-EYE

IF YOU HAVE ANY SHADOW OF A DOUBT ABOUT WHAT TO USE ON YOUR LIDS, **HARD CANDY LOOK PRO IN NATURAL EYES** (\$8, walmart.com) CAN HELP. THE PALM-SIZE TIN HAS NINE COORDINATING SHADOWS, PLUS PRIMER, LINER, AND INSTRUCTIONS (AHA!) FOR DAY AND NIGHTTIME LOOKS.

### Spiral bound

Work out any kinks in the shower. **Aveda Be Curly Intensive Detangling Masque** (\$27, aveda.com) is packed with hydrating butters and oils that help define ringlets and tame frizz without weighing hair down.





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so your 6" heel  
broke and you  
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ROAD TEST

REALSIMPLE  
ROAD TEST

## SHAMPOO

Of 65  
formulas put  
to work,  
here are the  
ones testers  
showered  
with praise.

Written by Jenny Jin  
Photograph by Barbara Donninelli



GETTING HAIRCOLOR YOU LOVE  
IS AN INVESTMENT  
IT DESERVES OUR UTMOST CARE

PURE RESPECT FOR YOUR HAIR

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- ANTI-FADING SHAMPOO AND CONDITIONER  
PROTECT COLOR
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AND ROSEMARY BOTANICALS RESPECT EVERY STRAND

Because you're worth it.

**L'ORÉAL**<sup>®</sup>  
PARIS  
HAIR EXPERTISE

## ROAD TEST

### 1 BEST FOR SHINE

#### Rusk Deepshine Oil Moisturizing Shampoo

Loaded with nourishing argan oil, the fast-rinsing formula removes any dulling residue while imparting a glossy, luminous sheen throughout. "My hair felt squeaky clean but still surprisingly soft," said a tester.

**TO BUY:** \$15, ulta.com.

### 2 BEST ALL-NATURAL

#### Acure Triple Action Repairing Shampoo

No matter your level of eco-consciousness, this blend of organic argan and pumpkin-seed oils will turn skeptics into believers—and strawlike strands into spun silk. Testers liked the sweet, almond scent, too.

**TO BUY:** \$10, target.com.

TO PREVENT  
TANGLES, USE UP  
AND DOWN  
STROKES INSTEAD  
OF CIRCULAR  
MOTIONS WHEN  
WASHING  
YOUR SCALP.

Shampoo hack from  
hairstylist Tippi Shorter:  
"Use a clarifying formula  
on the scalp only, where  
dirt and oil accumulate,  
and use a moisturizing  
one on the parch-prone  
midlengths to ends."

### 3 BEST FOR BRASSINESS

#### Orbè Bright Blonde Shampoo

Whether you're a baby blond or a seasoned salt-and-pepper, this violet-tinged rinse brightens your base by nixing any unflattering tones that have crept in. "I use this weekly to keep my highlights fresh," said a tester.

**TO BUY:** \$44, oribe.com.

### 4 BEST FOR VOLUME

#### Suave Professionals Sea Mineral Infusion Shampoo

"I finally have those effortless, beachy waves without any crunch," said a tester. Moisturizing sea minerals and salt deliver all-day lift at the crown, even to fine-haired users.

**TO BUY:** \$3 at drugstores.

### 5 BEST FOR COLORED HAIR

#### Shu Uemura Color Lustre Shampoo

Yes, it's sulfate-free (though the fluffy lather could have fooled us), but this protective pick also has antioxidants that prevent color from fading in the sun.

**TO BUY:** \$48, shuueumuraartofhair-usa.com.

"To distribute shampoo more evenly and cover a larger surface area at once, squeeze shampoo into your palms and rub them together to emulsify the cleanser before applying it to your head," says hairstylist Ruth Roche.

THE SIZE  
OF A QUARTER:  
HOW BIG A BLOB  
OF SHAMPOO  
YOU NEED PER  
WASH.

Photographs by Ralph Smith



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PARIS  
HAIR EXPERTISE

## ROAD TEST

One of the most common shampoo mistakes? Not wetting hair sufficiently. "I completely soak my hair and do a prerinse to wash out any product buildup first, then I go in with shampoo. The extra step gives your style lasting power," says hairstylist Mara Roszak.

WANT FLAKES TO DISAPPEAR? MASSAGE A DANDRUFF SHAMPOO INTO YOUR SCALP AND LEAVE IT ON FOR A FEW EXTRA MINUTES BEFORE RINSING.

### 6 BEST FOR DRY HAIR L'Oréal Paris Advanced Haircare Power Moisture Shampoo

Brimming with hydrating ingredients, like sodium hyaluronate, this pearly white cream smooths flyaways and softens brittle ends so hair is "less tangled" and "easier to manage," said testers.  
**TO BUY:** \$5 at drugstores.

### 7 BEST FOR CURLS

**Dove Quench Absolute Shampoo**  
Frizz, snarls, buildup. This velvety cleanser tackles the trifecta of curl offenders with the new "it" oil, buriti. "I had better control over my typically unruly hair," said a tester.  
**TO BUY:** \$5, dove.com.

### 8 BEST FOR OILY SCALPS

**Aveda Invati Exfoliating Shampoo**  
Salicylic acid cuts through buildup and oil (which clog follicles and hinder new growth), and the herbal scent cuts through the senses in a refreshing way.  
**TO BUY:** \$28, aveda.com.

### 9 BEST FOR FRIZZ

**John Frieda Frizz Ease Beyond Smooth Shampoo**

This fuzz-busting formula eschews traditional smoothers, like silicone, in favor of pure coconut oil. The results are sleek—not slick—strands that stand up to humidity.  
**TO BUY:** \$10, ulta.com.

### 10 BEST TWO-IN-ONE Pureology Strength Cure Cleansing Condition

Packed with protein and fatty acids, this rich hybrid cleans and conditions hair sans suds. "It actually does both jobs well, unlike the old-school versions," said a tester.  
**TO BUY:** \$34, ulta.com.

### THE EXPERTS

RUTH ROCHE,  
Pureology artist.  
MARA ROSZAK,  
celebrity hairstylist  
for L'Oréal Paris.  
TIPPI SHORTER,  
global artistic  
director for textured  
hair at Aveda.

1 YEAR: THE SHELF LIFE OF A SHAMPOO AFTER OPENING. LOOK FOR CHANGES IN COLOR OR SMELL.



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HOW-TO

**HOT LIPS**

Makeup melted before it's even reached your face? To reconstitute, mix molten lipstick with petroleum jelly, scoop into a contact-lens case, and refrigerate until firm.

## MELTPROOF YOUR MAKEUP

Six pro tricks to prevent streaks, smudges, and shine—all summer long.

Written by Jenny Jin

Photographs by Levi Brown

THE GUIDE  
beauty



**Can't take  
the heat?  
Sure you can.**

**You just need  
a few cool  
strategies and  
clever swap-outs  
to look—and  
feel—more chill.**

### 1. Moisture check

"The key to lasting summer makeup is starting with the right skin-care products," says Jackie Gomez, a celebrity makeup artist in New York City. If you tend to be on the shinier side, look for a mattifying moisturizer, like **Cetaphil DermaControl Oil Control Moisturizer SPF 30** (\$20, amazon.com), to keep oil at bay. If you have drier skin, try a more hydrating formula, like **Mario Badescu The Moisture Magnet SPF 15** (\$24, mariobadescu.com). Both are lightweight and have SPF, which eliminates an extra step—and layer—from your routine.

### 2. Prep time

Similar to priming a wall before painting, applying face primer helps makeup go on smoothly and increases its wear. Rub onto grease-prone areas and let it sink in. Skip foundation and use concealer instead. "It evens out skin without feeling heavy," says Gomez.

### 3. Fadeproof blush

When faced with humidity, powders tend to feel heavy on the skin and become blotchy, says Ashleigh Ciucci, a makeup artist in New York City. Go with a cream blush, like **Burberry Lip & Cheek Bloom** (above; \$30, burberry.com), which contains dimethicone to help the pigment sink into skin and stay put. Tap the color onto the apples of your cheeks and blend toward your temples.



**DOUBLE DUTY**  
Tap onto lips  
for a sheer,  
nonsticky hit  
of color.

### 4. Smudge-free eyes

Whether your look is smoky or neutral, adding heat is sure to yield messy results. Stop shadow from creasing with an eye-shadow primer, like **Urban Decay Eyeshadow Primer Potion in Original** (\$20, urbandecay.com). "This gives color something to hold on to and wards off greasy lids," says Gomez. Then use a water-resistant liner (**Revlon ColorStay Eyeliner**, \$8 at drugstores), eye shadow (**Make Up For Ever Aqua Cream**, \$23, sephora.com), and mascara (**CoverGirl Lash Blast Volume Water-proof Mascara**, \$9, drugstore.com).



### 5. Stay-right-there lips

To prevent lipstick from migrating outside the lines, switch out your creamy go-to for a stain, like **Wet n' Wild Mega-slick Balm Stain** (\$3 at drugstores). For more pigment, try a matte lipstick, like **Bite Beauty Matte Crème Lip Crayon** (\$24, sephora.com), which will adhere to lips and is less likely to feather or bleed.



### 6. Sealing the deal

For an extra insurance policy, spritz on a setting spray, like **L'Oréal Paris Infallible Pro-Spray and Set Makeup Extender** (\$17, drugstore.com). This superfine mist contains oil-blotting polymers to lock everything in place.



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# HOW TO WEAR JEANS NOW

They have been, and remain, your 24-7 basic. But they also remain sometimes tricky to fit (and pull off). Here's a tutorial on which of the season's newest cuts are cut out for you.

Written by Penny Wren  
Photographs by Johnny Miller



# Girlfriend jeans

THINK OF THESE AS SCHLUMPY BOYFRIEND JEANS, ON A DIET.  
THEY'RE JUST AS COMFORTABLE, ONLY CUTER.

1

2

3

## WHO CAN WEAR THEM?

Anyone. "The girlfriend jean is the answer to the question 'How can I wear jeans that are relaxed but not sloppy?'" says Peggi Jewell, the vice president of merchandising and design for 7 for All Mankind. The sleeker silhouette eliminates the boxiness that's typical with boyfriend jeans (which often swallow up petite frames or make full hips and thighs appear bigger).

## WHAT TO PAIR THEM WITH

Can you say, "Limitless dress-up or dress-down potential"? A lighter or distressed wash gives anything you pair them with—whether it's a structured blazer and wedges or a button-down and slip-on sneakers—a dose of not-trying-too-hard chicness.

## HOW SHOULD THEY FIT?

You want them to be slightly roomy, as opposed to slouchy and hanging off your hips. They look best when they follow, not cling to, the curves of your body.

**1 CURVY FIT RUBY BOYFRIEND BY LEE**  
TO BUY: \$58, lee.com.

**2 EMERSON BY CITIZENS OF HUMANITY**  
TO BUY: \$258, citizensofhumanity.com.

**3 STRAIGHT CROP AND ROLL BY JEN7**  
TO BUY: \$175, neimanmarcus.com.

This pair's contoured waistband promises there will be no gapping on top.

## Rolled cuffs 101

They're *baaack*. A little refresher course. (Note: **Pegging**—the tight rolling from the 80s—is still passé.)

**Fold the hem upward about 1/2 inch. Repeat once or twice more until the rolled cuff hits about an inch or two above your ankle.** "Any higher than that and it's a Capri," says Lady Fuller, the CEO of the Blues Jean Bar, a specialty retail store with three U.S. locations. **Make a point to avoid symmetry—cuffs look more effortless and cool a bit off-kilter.**



Naan Wrap with NEW  
Spicy Indian Veggie Patties



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JUST WHAT THE  
WORLD ORDERED™

# Flared jeans

UNLIKE BELL-BOTTOMS, THESE 70s-STYLE WIDE-LEGS  
BOAST A MORE FLATTERING GRADUAL FLARE.

1

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## WHO CAN WEAR THEM?

As it stands now, most flares are made for women who are around five feet seven or taller. Yes, you can tailor them. "But you lose the integrity of the flare if you chop off too much," says Jewell, who adds that 7 for All Mankind recently began making flared jeans for women of average height (around five-five). No matter what your shape (apple, pear, petite—whatever), this style will make your legs look longer.

## WHAT TO PAIR THEM WITH

"I'm envisioning a little black T-shirt and red espadrille wedges," says Fuller. You can opt for a shirt that's fitted or loose; tucked or untucked, so long as the hem stops near the waist or hips. If the top covers your back pockets, it's too long.

## HOW SHOULD THEY FIT?

Aim for a mid to high rise that fits snugly through the hips and thighs, with the flare starting right above the knee. "If the flare begins lower than that, you'll look like you're wearing bell-bottoms," says Fuller.

## Flares dragging on the ground?

Here's how to fix that.

1. Wash the jeans first. They may shrink as much as 1/2 inch in length.
2. Try them with heels, the chunkier, the better. Failproof options are wedges, stacked heels, and platforms.
3. Still too long? Cut them and leave a raw edge. (See center pair.)
4. If you prefer the polish of finished hems, bring the jeans to a tailor. Also take along a few pairs of shoes that you plan to wear with them. This way, you'll find a length that works for all of them. "Ideally, just the tips of your shoes should peek out," says Jewell. "If the jeans bunch up, they're too long."

**1 BROOKE FLARE BY LUCKY BRAND JEANS**  
TO BUY: \$99, dillards.com.

**2 MAJORELLE FLARE BY MCGUIRE**  
TO BUY: \$207, clubmonaco.com.

**3 LE FLARE DE FRANCOISE BY FRAME DENIM**  
TO BUY: \$239, net-a-porter.com.

DIY alert: Raw edges are now OK—cool even. Cut hems yourself on any style of jean. Just be careful not to chop off too much!



# Vintagey straight jeans

THE INSPIRATION: LEVI'S 501s FROM WAY BACK WHEN. THE 2015-APPROVED VERSION IMPROVES UPON THE CLASSIC CUT WITH A FEMALE-FRIENDLY FIT.

1

2

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## WHO CAN WEAR THEM?

Calling all heights and body types. Since the leg doesn't taper and there's a straight line from the knee to the leg opening, it's more accommodating than skinnies—especially if you're fuller on your lower body (hips, thighs, calves).

## WHAT TO PAIR THEM WITH

Go for a light wash to up the "vintage" factor. Channel Marilyn Monroe with a knotted-in-the-front oversize oxford. Or try a floral boho blouse or a striped preppy polo. Sport your knockout heels or your kick-back flats.

## HOW SHOULD THEY FIT?

"You can wear them tight through the hips and thighs or a bit loose and slouchy," says Jill Guenza, the global vice president of women's design for Levi Strauss & Co. To keep the look modern, not dowdy, choose a slightly cropped pair.

## Battle of the brands

Find the labels most likely to fit you.

**CURVY:**  
Curve ID, J Brand, Joe's Jeans, Levi's, 7 for All Mankind.

**TUMMY:**  
Forever 21, Frame Denim, Henry & Belle, Level 99.

**PETITE:**  
AG Jeans, Ann Taylor, Gap, MiH Jeans at Shopbop.

**TALL:** Acne Studios, Banana Republic, J.Crew, Uniqlo.

**PLUS SIZE:**  
Asos, Ava & Viv at Target, Avenue, Eloquii.

**MATURE:**  
Citizens of Humanity Sculpt, Jen 7, Lee Jeans, NYDJ.

**1 HIS JEAN IN GRACE BY GOLDSIGN**  
TO BUY: \$268, amarees.com.

**2 1969 DESTRUCTED GIRLFRIEND JEAN BY GAP**  
TO BUY: \$80, gap.com.

**3 CROPPED RELAXED SKINNY WITH RELEASED HEM BY 7 FOR ALL MANKIND**  
TO BUY: \$198, 7forallmankind.com.

The extra-soft denim and the "fallen hem" look give this pair an instant broken-in feel.

# Skinny jeans

THE FITS-LIKE-A-SECOND-SKIN SILHOUETTE REFUSES TO DIE.  
LIGHTER WASHES KEEP IT UP-TO-DATE.

1

2

3

## WHO CAN WEAR THEM?

Most figures, with caveats. If you're belly-conscious or prone to muffin top, opt for a mid-rise with more tummy coverage, says Fuller. For curvy figures, try a waistband that's cut higher in the back to fit the waist and hips better.

## WHAT TO PAIR THEM WITH

You're in "anything goes" territory. Top them with one of the three T's—tee, tank, or tunic. As for shoes, you have the freedom to switch from heels to flats or delicate to chunky with abandon.

## Stretch factor

A pair that bags is a bum deal. To find jeans that give in a good way...

...ERR ON THE SIDE OF TIGHT.

"Stretch jeans give about a half to a full size after you wear them for a day," says Fuller, who thinks most women wear skinny jeans that are too loose.

...FORGET PERCENTAGES.

Jeans typically contain 2 to 10 percent stretch (Lycra, spandex, elastane, or polyurethane). But relying on numbers may not be effective, since the stretch factor also depends on the weight of the denim and the cut of the pants. Instead, try on jeans for at least 10 minutes to see if they'll bag.

...LOOK FOR FOUR-WAY STRETCH.

"The fibers stretch crosswise and lengthwise, allowing jeans to retain their shape," says Fuller. This type of denim may not be labeled, so ask a salesperson (or Google it).

## HOW SHOULD THEY FIT?

"They should follow the lines of your body," says Jewell. "But they shouldn't make you look sausage-y, either."

There should be minimal creasing and bunching in the leg, seat, and tummy areas.

Trick of the eye: The side seams sit closer to the front of the legs to slim the thighs visually.

**1 721 HIGH RISE SKINNY BY LEVI'S**  
TO BUY: \$78, levi.com.

**2 TWIST BY AMO DENIM**  
TO BUY: \$262, fwd.com.

**3 THE LEGGING IN SUN-FADED BLUE NIGHT BY AG JEANS**  
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## Make it stop.

You know the sound. You know where it's coming from (the mouth that wants more ice creeeeam). But do you know how to silence it—stat?

Written by Jennifer King Lindley  
Illustrations by Graham Roumieu

WHINING IS THE parenting equivalent of nails on a chalkboard—the high-pitched, drawn-out pleading your three-year-old thinks is going to make you refill her juice but is actually going to make you lose your mind. Want proof it's driving you crazy? A 2011 study published in *Journal of Social, Evolutionary, and Cultural Psychology* found kids' whining to be more distracting than the sound of a screeching table saw to parents. (Subjects did math problems while listening to each sound and completed fewer correctly during the whining.) While most kids outgrow it, some teenagers and adults have their own versions. "It's awful to listen to, impossible to ignore, and can make you feel like you're chewing on glass," says Jack Maypole, an associate professor of pediatrics at the Boston University School of Medicine. Before you blow your top, read on.

# Why, oh whine?

Animals, not just humans, learn to whine and cry as a means of survival. A study published in *Current Biology* found that hungry house cats emit a special “solicitation purr” (the usual pleasing rumble mixed with a high-frequency element similar to a baby’s cry), which triggers a sense of urgency in humans. (Grab that Fancy Feast!) Rhesus monkeys whine and throw tantrums for motherly attention, and get this: According to a 2009 British study, the mothers are more likely to give in if it happens in front of other monkeys, who become aggressive if the mother can’t quiet her little one. Sound familiar? “Whining is like a cry with speech added,” says Rosemarie Sokol-Chang, Ph.D., the lead author of the table-saw study and an instructor of psychology at the State University of New York, New Paltz.

It starts as soon as children can talk, giving otherwise powerless kids a tool for getting their needs met (for food, for protection, to watch *Frozen* for the 400th time). It’s survival, because adults are wired to respond. “The high-pitched, exaggerated tones are suited to getting attention from caregivers,” says Sokol-Chang. It tends to peak in preschool, when the vocabularies of kids are exploding at the same time that they’re venturing out in the wider world and encountering new desires (toys). It usually wanes in the

elementary-school years, as the prefrontal cortex, the “thinking” part of the brain, becomes more developed and kids get better at delaying gratification and regulating emotions. (It also doesn’t go over well at that age with peers. No one likes a big baby.)

Are some kids more prone to whining? Yes, says Timothy Verduin, Ph.D., a clinical assistant professor of child and adolescent psychiatry at New York University Langone Medical Center, in New York City. “Some kids have a lower tolerance for frustration and can’t handle no.” And, unfortunately, it can come roaring back during adolescence, a key time of parent-child conflict, when teens chafe over the unfairness of, well, everything. (*But, Daaad, Evan’s parents let him get a tattoo!*) Like younger kids, teens use the same needling tones, wearing you down until you give in.

Of course, giving in makes things worse. (You know that.) “The best way to encourage a behavior is to randomly reward it. Think of slot machines in Vegas,” says Verduin. In other words, your child will keep going, knowing that whining will eventually work because it has in the past. These expert strategies will help with the kids, little and big. (To deal with whining adults—yes, adults—turn to page 105.)



## LITTLE KIDS

**PREEMPT.** “I ask parents, ‘If I wanted to see your child whine, what time of day, what circumstances would I watch for?’” says Susan Stiffelman, a family therapist in Malibu, California, and the author of *Parenting With Presence*. “They almost always tell me, ‘Right before dinner’ or ‘When I’m nursing the baby.’” Kids are often at their whiniest when they are tired or hungry or want your attention back. Practice prevention: a snack between errands or a cuddle before a conference call.

**TRY TO IGNORE IT.** That’s the best way to discourage whining, says Verduin. But if you give any attention, make it positive, never negative. When your child is pleading for the eye-level candy, sympathize. Who can blame her? “I would like everything in Target, too,” says Lawrence Cohen, Ph.D., a child psychologist in Boston and the author of *Playful Parenting*. Let her know that she can express her feelings rather than stuffing them. Say, “I know you really want that gum and are disappointed I won’t





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buy it." Tears are good; they relieve the frustration that whining represents. (Whining is often referred to as a "stuck cry.") "Letting emotions flow makes you feel better," says Cohen.

**HAVE THEM DO A REWIND.** Julie de Azevedo Hanks, Ph.D., a licensed clinical social worker in Salt Lake City, has said this to her four kids: "I can tell you have something important to say. If you say it again in your strong voice, I can help you better." Make sure you try this first with a request that you plan to grant, so your child can see the payoff immediately.

**START SINGING.** By the time that a young child is riled up, the emotional side of her brain has taken over, says Lynne Kenney, Psy.D., a pediatric psychologist in Scottsdale, Arizona, and a coauthor of *Bloom: 50 Things to Say, Think, and Do*

*With Anxious, Angry, and Over-the-Top Kids*. "Music engages a different part of the brain. So I might make up a little song... *We're talking cupcakes, cupcakes!*" She also recommends whispering to a whining child—and asking her to whisper back her request. That can hit the reset button for many kids.

**VISUALIZE THE FOOD COURT.**

Kids can pick up on your tension about not losing your cool in public, and they sense an advantage.

Before a potentially challenging outing, visualize yourself staying calm and holding firm; imagine the dirty looks of bystanders rolling off you, says Verduin. Or just exit the mall with your whining child, says Hanks: "They learn that if they throw a fit, they have to leave." Game over.

**IF YOU'RE GOING TO CAVE, DO IT IMMEDIATELY.** You know that the situation is challenging (a gradua-

tion lunch for her older cousin, multiple speeches included) and that you're going to fold. At the first beseeching look for your iPhone, hand it over and make it clear that this was your idea. If you wait, you're training your child to stick with the whining for an eventual triumph.

## TEENAGERS

**LISTEN...** Like younger kids, teens want your understanding (promise!), and though their voices may be lower, they'll still resort to a whine to get through to you. "We often stop listening to teens as soon as we don't agree—and instead start thinking about rebuttals," says Cohen. When his daughter was 15, Cohen says she wanted a nose ring. Even as a professional therapist, he had a hard time hearing her out. He managed to smile encouragingly and keep quiet as she presented all her reasons. He didn't grant the nose ring, but she did feel heard.

**...BUT NOT FOREVER.** It's time for a more sophisticated version of the rewind. If you've heard the argument but the whining is escalating, butt in. Say, "This is not something I'm going to say yes to. I know that seems unfair. I'm happy to explain my reasons when you can discuss this in a reasonable voice," suggests Verduin.

**WATCH OUT FOR YOUR OWN**

**WHINING.** Try to model a positive way to share your own daily frustrations. Instead of moaning, "Why does the sink always get backed up at the absolute worst times?" do your own rewind: "Time to call the plumber. Now, what kind of pizza should we order for dinner?"







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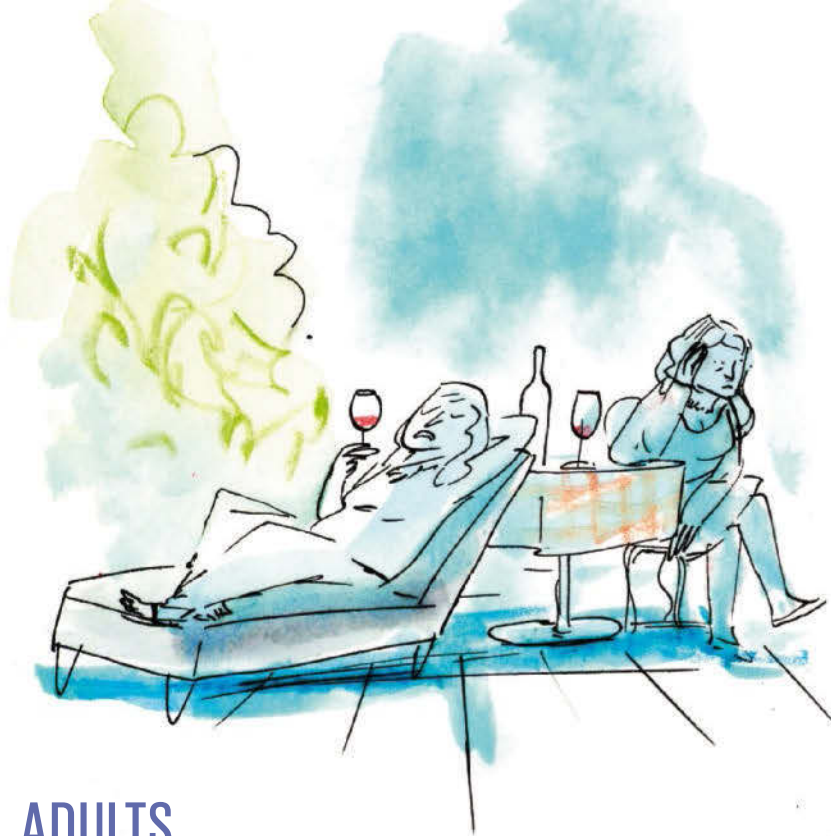
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## ADULTS

Whining's grating tone has an evolutionary benefit for big people, too—scientists call it an attachment vocalization. "It elicits sympathy and attention," says Robin Kowalski, Ph.D., the author of *Complaining, Teasing, and Other Annoying Behaviors*. A whine can also build an instant us-against-the-world connection. (In a crowded waiting room: "Doctors—always late, right?") It becomes a problem when it's a chronic communication style, "trivial subjects, voiced in an infantile tone," says Guy Winch, Ph.D., the author of *Emotional First Aid*. Or just heavy sighs. (This is different from complaining, which seeks a resolution. "Waiter, my entrée arrived cold.") Here's how to cope with the grown-up kvetching.

**BE PATIENT.** "Whining can be a cover for a deeper vulnerability," says Hanks. A friend who carps about his spouse's travel schedule may be worried that the two are growing apart. (Also, whiners might not realize how constant it is, says Hanks, who has been known to tape whining clients, then let them listen to themselves.)

**DON'T TRY TO FIX THINGS.** Chronic whiners are looking for sympathy, not a solution. Saying, "That's hard! What are you planning to do about that?" may jolt her into strategizing. Simply restating her position may also be enough to make her feel heard and stem the whining. "I can't believe you have houseguests coming again so soon. I would be overwhelmed, too!"

**DECLARE A WHINING TIME.** If your husband has spent every dinner this week unloading about work, suggest a time limit. Say, "For 10 minutes, I will listen completely. Then let's move on so we can enjoy our time together," suggests Winch.

**ESTABLISH BOUNDARIES.** If you have a habitual whiner who's dragging you down—maybe a sister in a repetitive "poor me" loop—say, "I feel we have gone over the same ground here. Is there something I'm not getting?" Or even more directly: "I know that you've been having a tough time with your in-laws lately. But to be honest, I only have the energy to listen to this for a couple of more minutes, then I want to hear all about your vacation plans!"

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TRACY HUTSON

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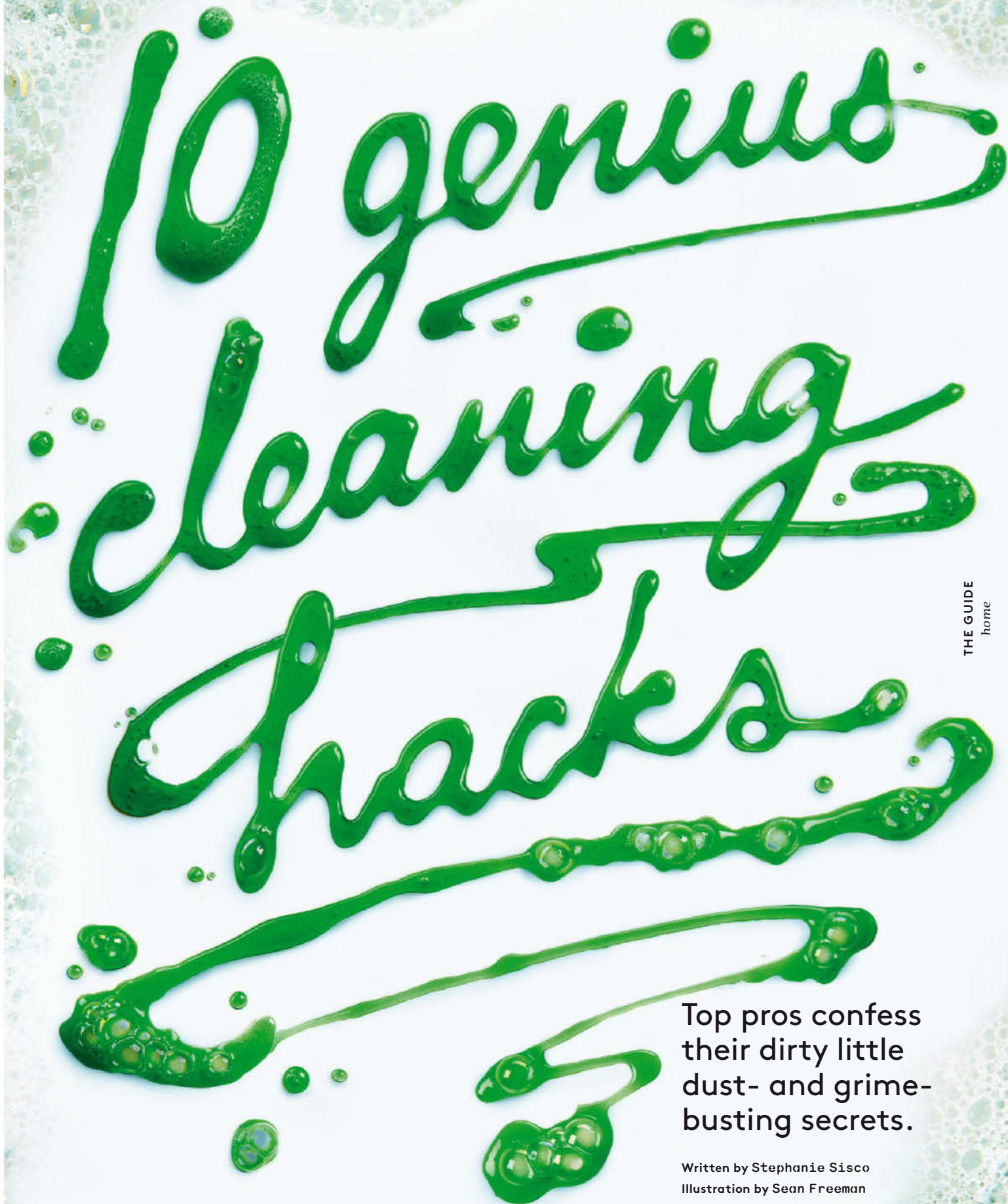
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# 10 genius cleaning hacks

THE GUIDE  
home

Top pros confess  
their dirty little  
dust- and grime-  
busting secrets.

Written by Stephanie Sisco  
Illustration by Sean Freeman

# 10 Genius Cleaning Hacks

## No. 1

### I CLEAN RUGS WITH A SHOWER SQUEEGEE.

**THE MOTIVE:** With vacuuming, fur weaves its way into the rug fibers and hair can get tangled in the brush roll. Edged with rubber, a squeegee glides along a rug smoothly, creating static electricity that draws hair and fur from the carpet.

**THE METHOD:** Run a dry squeegee across the rug in overlapping rows. Collect clumps as they form and discard.

—MELISSA MAKER, FOUNDER OF THE CLEAN MY SPACE CLEANING COMPANY, YOUTUBE CHANNEL, AND BLOG

## No. 2

### I use packing tape as a duster.

**THE MOTIVE:** It's easy to ignore lampshades, speakers, and the insides of drawers because it's tough to get them clean with regular dusting. With its strong adhesive, packing tape is the answer—it grabs dirt from fabric and crevices.

**THE METHOD:** Press a foot-long stretch of tape onto the surface, then pull it back to pick up the grime. To get crumbs out of drawers, ball up the tape, leaving much of the sticky side facing out. Tap the ball onto the debris, applying extra pressure to catch stubborn pieces.

—MAEVE RICHMOND, FOUNDER OF THE ORGANIZATIONAL COMPANY MAEVE'S METHOD

## No. 3

### I "mop" with my feet.

**THE MOTIVE:** Cleaning floors and baseboards with a rag and the standard hands-and-knees method takes mettle. Legs are typically stronger than arms; the added force speeds the process.

**THE METHOD:** Using a formula of equal parts water and white vinegar, spritz the bottoms of a pair of thick, absorbent socks, then put them on. Glide one foot across the baseboards. Spritz again, then skate around the floor to pick up dust, starting with the farthest corner and working toward the entryway. When you're finished, toss the socks in the washing machine. Need to save your socks for the gym? Try Evriholder Slipper Genie cleaning slippers (\$12, amazon.com).

—PAM YOUNG, FOUNDER OF CLUBORGANIZED.COM

## No. 4

### I use a polymer-based car wax to prevent toilet-bowl stains.

**THE MOTIVE:** Traditional formulas work for a bit, but this solution's polymers coat the surface for six months, keeping it slick so nothing sticks.

**THE METHOD:** Clean the toilet to remove existing stains, then back the water out. This is easy: Shut off the water valve

by turning it all the way to the right; flush the toilet, holding down the handle until most of the water flows from the tank; and pour a bucket of water into the bowl. Dry the interior with a cotton cloth, and use a separate cloth to apply the protectant. (Try 3M Performance Finish Synthetic Wax; \$20, amazon.com.) Make sure to open a window for ventilation. Let sit for 10 minutes, then replenish the water by turning the valve left to open. For upkeep, every three months pour ½ cup distilled white vinegar into the bowl to prevent water rings from forming.

—MARY FINDLEY, CLEANING EXPERT AND OWNER OF MARY MOPPINS

## No. 5

### I tackle marks on upholstery with shaving cream.

**THE MOTIVE:** Sometimes you don't have the right stain solution on hand. Shaving cream, which is essentially a whipped soap, is an ideal substitute. Its lather can penetrate nearly any stain and lift it to the surface. (Test first in an inconspicuous place.)

**THE METHOD:** Apply a small dollop to a damp cloth. (Use a standard white shaving cream, like Barbasol Original, rather than a gel version.) Dab this onto the spot and let sit for 30 minutes, then blot with a clean, damp cloth. If any stain remains, reapply and let sit overnight.

—CHERYL SOUSAN, FOUNDER OF THE LIFESTYLE BLOG TIDYMOM.NET

## No. 6

### My fix for stained food storage containers is the sun.

**THE MOTIVE:** Even if you put the containers in the dishwasher, you can never get them fully, good-as-new clean. The sun's rays are akin to a natural bleach, so they eliminate most stains.

**THE METHOD:** After washing the containers in the sink with dish soap and warm water, place them on a clean tea towel in the sun. Let sit for eight hours. Rinse and let dry.

—DONNA SMALLIN KUPER, CERTIFIED HOUSECLEANING TECHNICIAN AND AUTHOR OF *CLEAR THE CLUTTER, FIND HAPPINESS*

## No. 7

### I use newspaper to soak up garbage spills.

**THE MOTIVE:** A newspaper lining absorbs trash-bag leaks so you don't have to wash out the bin later.

**THE METHOD:** Place yesterday's news at the bottom of your trash bin with a plastic bag underneath, to keep the paper from sticking to the can. Discard it all when you toss the trash.

—TARA ARONSON, LIFESTYLE EXPERT AND AUTHOR OF *SIMPLIFY YOUR HOUSEHOLD*

## No. 8

### I don't wash the blender—I just press a button.

**THE MOTIVE:** A blender's sharp blades and ridged interior can be tricky—and dangerous—to clean.

**THE METHOD:** Fill the blender halfway with water, add a few drops of

dish soap, and blend on low for 10 seconds. Wipe down the upper area with the soapy water and a sponge, then rinse.

—MARLA KABASHIMA, ORGANIZING COACH AT MAEVE'S METHOD

## No. 9

### I quick-clean my mattress with a spritz of vodka.

**THE MOTIVE:** Mattress upkeep is often overlooked, even though pros suggest quarterly cleanings. Vodka is an odorless disinfectant that evaporates fast, so you'll never have to do a deep cleaning.

**THE METHOD:** Using a vodka-filled spray bottle, spritz the mattress and pillows when changing the sheets.

—PAM YOUNG

## No. 10

### I get rid of crayon marks on walls with toothpaste.

**THE MOTIVE:** Cleaning sprays can discolor walls. But a white, non-gel toothpaste that contains baking soda acts as a fine abrasive to rub away wax without leaving a tint.

**THE METHOD:** Apply with a clean toothbrush, scrub gently, then wipe clean with a damp cloth.

—CHERYL SOUSAN



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**Q.**

## Bedtime battle

**How can I get my cats to sleep in their baskets instead of all around the house?**

S.A., via Facebook

**A.** Negotiating with felines can be a challenge. "Cats do whatever they want, wherever they want," says veterinarian Lisa Maciorakowski. But you may be able to reach a détente by moving the baskets to their go-to napping spots or to an area with similar features.

(Cats gravitate toward spaces that are warm, like a sunny corner, or up high, like the top of a bookcase.) To make the sleep spot more appealing, slip an edible treat inside each basket.

(Keep this up for a few nights in a row.) It may also help to spray the basket interior with a calming pheromone prior to adding the treat, says animal trainer Mikkel Becker, who likes Feliway Behavior Modifier Spray (\$16, chewy.com.)

A scent strategy can keep the cats off your spot, too: Spritz your bed or the couch with orange essential oil. "Most cats don't like the smell of citrus, so it's a good way to deter them," says Becker.

**Written by**  
Sarah Grossbart

**Photographs by**  
Julia Christe



**Q.**

## Yip, yip, hooray!

**My dog gets overexcited sometimes, especially just before a walk. How can we calm her down?**

B.B., via Facebook

**A.** Your dog's hyperactivity can get you wound up, too, but the better way to handle it is to stay calm and show no reaction at all. (A negative response—like a stern "No jumping!"—rewards the dog with attention, which only reinforces the behavior, says veterinarian Ann Hohenhaus.) Instead, avoid looking at her or touching her until all four paws are on the ground. Once that happens, offer a treat as you put on her leash for the walk. "The dog will quickly learn that she'll get a reward faster if she's sitting still, not going berserk," says Hohenhaus.

**Q.**

## Furry forager

**Our 10-year-old Lab has begun to eat dirt from one spot in the yard, and it's making him ill. We haven't changed his food and have tried pet repellents and black pepper. Any other ideas?**

A.W., via Facebook

**A.** Dogs occasionally eat dirt because they're attracted to food there (say, hamburger remnants from a grill) or even animal droppings (gross). But if you haven't spotted either in the area, it's possible the behavior is a sign of sickness, so it's a good idea to consult a vet, says Hohenhaus. Clean bill of health? The dirt eating is probably a phase that can be curbed with (admittedly involved) training.

Start indoors, holding a treat in your hand but not letting him have it. Once he moves away from you, praise him and offer the treat. (Stand your ground; this can take a while.) Repeat multiple times, then start adding the command "Leave it" before giving the goodie. Next step: Put a toy on the counter, tell him to "leave it," and reward him once he has moved away. When he has grasped that, take him outside on a leash and instruct him to "leave it" as he heads toward the dirt. Produce the treat when he obeys. He should start avoiding the spot on his own within a few weeks.

## THE PET EXPERTS

MIKKEL BECKER,  
certified animal  
trainer at  
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# Ask the Organizer

## accessory anarchy

**I keep my jewelry in multiple boxes and chests. I can't see what I have, so I resort to wearing the same pieces over and over. How can I arrange it all so that it's easy to access and I actually use it?**

T. F. T., via Facebook

My favorite fix: House it in a roomy piece of furniture that allows you to keep all the jewelry spread out in single layers rather than clumps. Try a tall, skinny lingerie chest (Monterey six-drawer chest, \$187, overstock.com). Equip the drawers with flocked divided trays (Light Blue Stacking Jewelry Tray System, from \$8, containerstore.com), and limit each drawer to a single jewelry type—bracelets in one, earrings in another. If you want to give some favorites a prominent spot, arrange them on top of the dresser on velvet store-display pieces (Bracelet T-Bar, \$10, uline.com) or hang them on Command hooks (sold at hardware stores) in your closet. Prefer to keep all the jewelry out in the open? Pin each piece to a fabric-covered memo board mounted on the wall (Burlap Narrow Message Board, \$69, ballarddesigns.com).



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## treading carefully

**We go barefoot in the house—shoes get kicked off when you walk in. I need a nice-looking way to keep the shoes neat.**

K. B., via Facebook

An organizer with compartments is pretty no-fail. I like ClosetMaid's 15-cube version (\$37, closetmaid.com), but some of my clients prefer a unit with seating (Prepac Sonoma Cubbie Storage Bench, \$154, wayfair.com/RScubbies). A smaller-scale option, if you're strapped for space, is to leave a plastic tray by the front door. Look for one with a raised rim to keep wet or muddy footwear from spilling over onto the floor (Multipurpose Tray, \$19, alexcarseon.com).



**GOT A QUESTION?**  
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## switching gears

**My small sedan is the family car, and we accumulate a lot of stuff in there. How can I keep it cleaner?**

K. G., via Facebook

If you regularly leave coloring books and unfinished snack packs on the backseat for later, car clutter inevitably piles up. So put a waste can in the garage to make trash disposal automatic. Also, set a new family rule: Anything you bring into the car needs to come out when you get home. Of course, there are basic essentials that do need to be in

there, like a flashlight, an umbrella, and a first-aid kit. Storing those in an over-the-seat organizer is risky—it's tempting to treat it like a catchall. Instead, opt for an out-of-the-way trunk organizer (Rola Move Trunk Organizer, \$74, amazon.com). For overall upkeep, plan on pulling into a gas station to vacuum the car once a month. Having that on the calendar will make you more apt to keep up the decluttering in the off weeks.

**Illustration by**  
**The Ellaphant**  
**in the Room**





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Written by Camille Noe Pagán  
Illustrations by Jeannie Phan



YOU KNOW that physical activity is good for you. What you may not realize is just how much of a game changer it can be. In a study published this year in *Medicine & Science in Sports & Exercise*, researchers looked at 10 pairs of male identical twins in their 30s who were similar in most ways, right down to their eating habits—except that one twin in each pair had stopped exercising regularly in adulthood. Despite the fact that the less active twins had the exact same DNA as their fit brothers, after just three sedentary years, they had begun to develop insulin resistance (a precursor to diabetes), had more body fat and lower endurance—and, perhaps most notably, had less gray matter in the brain regions responsible for motor control and coordination. While the study was small, it's evidence that exercise may have as large an effect on your health as your genes do.

Of course, when you're debating whether to respond to two dozen unopened e-mails or go for a jog, "good health" can become an abstract concept to be worried about on another day. A simple way to make exercise more pressing—and desirable—is to take a goal-oriented approach. Research shows that certain forms of physical activity *are* particularly effective for specific objectives, and getting results will motivate you to lace up your gym shoes again and again. Here's how to match your workout to your needs and tap into the power of movement.

### **If you want more energy... then do any kind of exercise three to four times a week.**

Regular exercise increases energy and reduces fatigue in adults of all ages with various health conditions—even the kinds that cause exhaustion, like fibromyalgia—and in people who are healthy, too, according to a 2006 University of Georgia review of 70 studies. The study authors found that just 20 minutes of low- to moderate-intensity activity (including cardiovascular exercise, like biking, walking, strength training, or stretching) a few times a week improved energy in as little as four to six weeks. "Exercise evens out your fluid and salt balance, helps your body use sugar [in the bloodstream], and burns fat. Or as I often say, it helps you sweat out the mayonnaise," says Timothy Church, M.D., Ph.D., a

professor of preventive medicine at the Pennington Biomedical Research Center at Louisiana State University. "It fundamentally helps you feel better." What's more, "physical activity increases the size and number of your mitochondria, which are the cellular powerhouses that help your body operate efficiently," notes Stella Volpe, Ph.D., the chair of the department of nutrition sciences at Drexel University, in Philadelphia.

### **If you want to limit your doctor's visits...then wear a Fitbit.**

Yes, sitting is the new smoking: Research shows that the less you move, the higher your risk of, well, just about every health problem. "A hundred years ago, Americans spent their waking hours doing physically demanding tasks," says Steven N. Blair, an exercise scientist and professor at the University of South Carolina, in Columbia. "Today the average person sits at work all day, then goes home and sits in front of the television." But you don't need to join CrossFit to undo the ill effects of an office job and live a longer, healthier life, says Blair. Instead, try to move more. Also consider using a fitness-tracking device, like a Fitbit or a Garmin watch. The device will give you a reasonably accurate estimate of how active you are by logging your steps as you do activities like gardening, cleaning, and taking bathroom breaks. Any number over zero is good, but "7,000 steps a day and you're vastly improving your health," says Church.

And, yes, *all* movement counts. According to a 2013 study published in *Preventive Medicine*, people who did short bursts of physical activity—for example, raking leaves or pacing while talking on the phone—for a total of 150 minutes a week were as healthy as people who logged similar amounts of aerobic fitness (like biking). They had similar blood pressure, cholesterol levels, waist circumferences, and levels of C-reactive protein (an inflammatory marker found in the blood that is linked to health problems such as heart disease and arthritis).

**"The fact that exercise enables you to take better care of yourself and those around you is as much a reason to do it as disease prevention," says Bradley J. Cardinal, Ph.D., a codirector of the Sport and Exercise Psychology Lab at Oregon State University.**

### **If you want to spend as little time as possible exercising... then go all-out.**

No doubt you've heard of the magical seven-minute workout, the three-minute workout—even the *one-minute* workout. These high-intensity interval training (HIIT) routines, which typically alternate bouts of intense and less-intense exercise, aren't all hype. A 2014 study from McMaster University, in Ontario, found that overweight adults who biked at high intensity for just one minute while also doing nine minutes of moderate-intensity biking three times a week increased their endurance capacity by an average of 12 percent—a significant improvement, say researchers. Study subjects lowered their blood pressure and improved their levels of biochemical substances that increase mitochondria, too.

The key is to exercise hard—but not so hard that you hurt or over-exert yourself, says Church. A 2014 study published in the journal *PLOS One* found that people who did HIIT workouts on a daily or near daily





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basis had worse endurance than people who did the same workouts just three times a week. To give your body a break, intersperse quick-and-hard sweat sessions with enjoyable day-to-day activities, like walking.

### **If you want to ease a chronic health problem...then see a pro and go slow.**

When you're dealing with an ongoing health issue, it may seem tempting—safer, even—to avoid exercise, but that's exactly the time you can most benefit from movement. Exercise eases the symptoms of many chronic conditions, such as arthritis. And in the case of high blood pressure and type 2 diabetes, it can even reverse them. It also reduces pain by increasing blood flow and promoting the release of feel-good brain chemicals, like endorphins.

To avoid injury and burnout, begin slowly. "Start with 10 minutes, or even five, several times a week," advises Volpe. "You want to build strength and endurance over the course of several months." Get your doctor's OK before starting a new exercise program, but keep in mind that many physicians have little or no fitness expertise. A physical therapist or an American College of Sports Medicine–certified physiologist or personal trainer can help you create a personalized plan.

### **If you're trying to lose weight (or keep it off)...combine strength training and cardio.**

Sad yet established fact: Exercise alone usually won't take the extra pounds off; you have to curb your calorie intake for that to happen. (That's why a study published this year in *The Journal of Strength and Conditioning Research* found that most sedentary women who



did three weekly, vigorous-intensity treadmill workouts for 12 weeks but didn't change their eating habits were not able to lose weight.) However, data from the National Weight Control Registry—an ongoing, decades-long research study of people who lose a significant amount of weight—shows that those who successfully *maintain* a large loss do so in part by exercising most days of the week.

"You should be doing a combination of aerobic exercise and strength training," says Cedric X. Bryant, Ph.D., the chief science officer of the American Council on Exercise. Aerobic exercise burns calories that would otherwise be stored as extra pounds. Strength training builds and preserves muscle mass, "which can offset age-related muscle loss, keeping your metabolism revved, even during menopause," says Bryant.

Aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic exercise a week. But if you do high-intensity workouts, like running or Spinning, you can cut that amount in half. Do at least two weekly strength-training sessions, too, by lifting weights or doing Pilates, yoga, or resistance exercises (think planks and push-ups).

### **If you want to be less stressed or depressed...exercise regularly—but not too hard.**

"Even for experts like myself, the *real* reason to get excited about exercise is because it makes you feel great," says Bradley J. Cardinal, Ph.D., a codirector of the Sport and Exercise Psychology Lab at Oregon State University, in Corvallis. Women who get regular physical activity tend to have less stress and anxiety and higher self-esteem than do those who are inactive, even during what can be tough times.

If you are blue or have been diagnosed with depression, aerobic exercise is an especially effective mood booster. But "other forms of exercise, such as yoga and strength training, can help, too," says Jeffrey A. Katula, Ph.D., an associate professor in the department of health and exercise science at Wake Forest University, in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. Perhaps the best example is a now famous Duke University study published in 1999, which found that depressed adults who did 45 minutes of aerobic exercise three times a week improved their mood as much as did those who took the prescription antidepressant Zoloft instead of exercising.

"Exercise takes you out of your head; it's harder to worry when you're focusing on where you're walking or whether you can hit the tennis ball," says Teresa G. Gevedon,



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a psychiatrist at the University of Kentucky, in Lexington, who often prescribes exercise to patients with depression and anxiety. It also increases mood-boosting brain chemicals, such as serotonin, and endorphins, which ease pain and increase pleasure while lowering levels of the stress hormone cortisol.

But steer clear of any form of exercise that feels difficult or uncomfortable *while* you're doing it (such as sprints or a punishing Spinning class), advises Katula: "Though a negative experience during exercise is temporary, it may be enough to keep you from going back and doing it again." Even "light" exercise, like walking, will help you feel better, provided you do it most days. "When it comes to mood, the effects of exercise may only last about 24 hours," says Gevedon.

### THE STICK-WITH-IT SOLUTION

Think tracking the numbers on the scale motivates you? Think again. "External feedback, like focusing on pounds lost or how your clothes fit, isn't sustainable for most people," says Michelle Segar, Ph.D., a psychologist and the author of *No Sweat*. "You may see results one day or week, but when you don't, you won't want to exercise." Segar, a University of Michigan researcher who has spent her career studying motivation and behavior change, has identified science-backed solutions that do work. Here's how you can turn a once-in-a-while workout into a lifelong habit.

### Think of exercise as your secret weapon.

You have to give physical activity extra importance if you're going to make time for it. One way to do that: "View it as an escape from your day that brings you energy and well-being," says Segar. "In studies I've conducted, women who do this make exercise a regular practice, while those who don't end up skipping it." Finding an activity that you love and combining it with other things that make you feel good, like running through your favorite park or listening to a funny podcast while you work out, can make it even more enjoyable, which ups the odds that you'll do it again tomorrow.

### Be single-minded.

It's tempting to overhaul several areas of your life at once—starting a new workout the same week you cut sugar from your diet, for example. But that sets you up for failure. "We don't have the cognitive capacity to change lots of things at one time and sustain what we've changed," says Segar. If you're new to exercise, give yourself a few months to stay consistent, then move forward with other goals.



#### GET FIT ON THE GO

For a five-move workout you can do anywhere, visit [realsimple.com/fivemoves](http://realsimple.com/fivemoves).



### Ditch the weekend-warrior mentality.

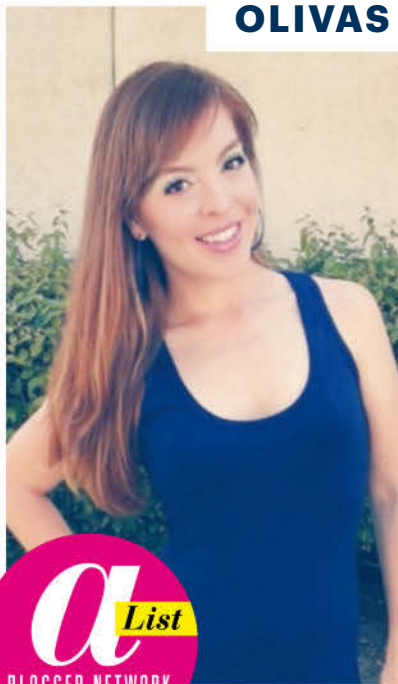
It's better to exercise for 10 minutes four times a week than to hit the gym only for an hour and only on Saturday. "Research clearly shows that the people who stick with exercise for life are the ones who make it a staple of their week," says Segar. "Consistency is what helps you keep at it during life's ebbs and flows. When exercise is a part of your day, just like showering or sleep, barriers such as bad weather, work issues, kids, and even a bad mood don't stop you from getting at least a little activity," says Segar.

### Stop saying yes all the time.

Life is hectic; people and events will unintentionally hijack your goals if you let them, says Segar. You don't have to automatically say no when someone asks you to do something that interferes with your workout. But do pause before you respond and ask yourself, *Is this request important enough to trump my feeling good and fueling the rest of my life?* As Segar says, "You don't want your default to be yes if it's at the expense of your well-being."



► MEET THE  
BLOGGER:  
**MONICA  
OLIVAS**



Monica Olivas started [runeatrepeat.com](http://runeatrepeat.com) six years ago to document her weight-loss journey and the training experience for her first marathon. Since then, she's conquered the marathon, lost weight, and is still running strong. Today she shares running tips, reviews, food diaries, weight loss features, and musings about life, liberty, and the pursuit of fitness. Monica is an RRCA-certified running coach and ACE-certified personal trainer based out of Southern California. Run Eat Repeat is read by over half a million people per month, from all around the world.

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INSTANT PICK-ME-UP

# AROMATHERAPY

THE GUIDE  
health



One stroll through a summer garden and you'll be reminded just how mood-enhancing the scents of nature can be. Here are research-backed ways to enjoy the benefits of three aromatic summer-blooming plants any time of the year.

## If you're feeling scatterbrained...

### **SNIFF: ROSEMARY**

The scent of this beautiful herb can improve prospective memory—the kind that helps you remember upcoming events and tasks, according to 2012 research from Northumbria University, in the United Kingdom. In this study, subjects who inhaled rosemary essential oil had higher blood levels of 1,8-cineole, a compound in the rosemary aroma that interacts with brain chemistry and enhances memory.

**TRY THIS:** Apply 5 drops of rosemary essential oil to a cotton ball and place it in a small glass bottle. (You'll find this and other essential oils at natural-food stores.) Inhale up to four times an hour while you're tackling a tricky project or working your way down your to-do list. Save your sniffing for your toughest tasks—too many whiffs of any odor in a single day may diminish the positive effects.

## If you're feeling exhausted...

### **SNIFF: PEPPERMINT**

The aroma of this fresh (and tasty) mint improves alert-

ness, according to a 2008 study published in *International Journal of Neuroscience*. Some experts believe that the tingling sensation you get when inhaling it is a very low-level pain signal that serves as a wake-up call to the brain.

**TRY THIS:** Massage your neck with a rejuvenating rub made from 10 drops of peppermint oil mixed into 1 ounce of a neutral carrier oil (such as canola or almond oil). Not a fan of peppermint? Eucalyptus oil has similar benefits.

## If you're feeling stressed...

### **SNIFF: LAVENDER**

The ultra-fragrant flower is high in esters, a family of molecules that produce a relaxing effect. When subjects in a 2008 University of Miami study took a bath infused with lavender oil, their heart rates slowed and their levels of cortisol, a stress hormone, were lower than those of a control group.

**TRY THIS:** Mix 5 to 8 drops of lavender essential oil with a teaspoon of a carrier oil and add it to a bathtub full of warm water. Soak for a few minutes before bed and you may find that it's easier to doze off. Or dab a drop of lavender oil on your neck or temples, before bed or any time that you're tense.

Written by  
Sally Wadyka  
Photograph by  
Johnny Miller

PROF. STYLING BY SARAH SMART; THANK YOU TO: PAMELA DALTON, PH.D., AN OLFACTORY SCIENTIST AT THE MONELL CHEMICAL SENSES CENTER; AND MINDY GREEN, M.S., R.A., R.H.





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# Work & Money

THE VIEW FROM HERE

When lawyer *Reshma Saujani* lost a primary bid for Congress in 2010, she didn't miss a beat: She wrote a book about how fear of failure holds women back and founded Girls Who Code, a nonprofit that has taught computer science to thousands of kids. She's on a mission to build the next generation of female tech leaders. With her newborn asleep beside her, Saujani, 39, spoke with *Real Simple* about closing the gender gap and the value of a "try, try again" attitude.

## **Tell us about your childhood.**

I grew up in a town outside Chicago. My parents moved there as refugees from Uganda in 1973. I saw how resilient my parents were—in a foreign country, working very hard, with no family nearby.

## **Was it hard for you?**

A few days before my eighth-grade gradu-

ation, I was called a "haji," which is a derogatory name for an Indian person, and was challenged to a playground fight. I got beaten up. It really taught me about my identity and to not be ashamed or afraid. That's when I started an organization at school called PRISM [Prejudice Reduction Interested Students Movement]. It focused on teaching my peers about other cultures, religions, and communities to encourage tolerance. We had weekly meetings and did a townwide march.

## **You were political very early on.**

It was really my parents' experience that influenced me. The entire Indian community was expelled from Uganda in the 1970s. A lot of the community didn't vote. Watching what my family went through taught me that if you don't participate, everything can be taken away at a moment's notice.

## **After working at a law firm and a hedge fund, you ran for Congress in New York in 2010 and lost badly.**

I had no idea that I had zero chance of winning until I lost. I'm someone who applied to Yale

**RESHMA SAUJANI**  
• Founder of Girls Who Code  
• New York City



PHOTOGRAPH BY JESSICA SCRANTON

THE GUIDE  
work & money

Written by Jane Porter

Law School three times before I got in. I've failed a ton in my life, but I had never failed at something so public. In some ways, it was deeply humiliating. I felt horrible because I had put my entire life savings into this. People gave me resources and time they didn't have. I had been on the campaign trail making promises I wanted to keep. I thought I let a lot of people down. Building myself back up from that was very humbling and powerful.

#### How did you do it?

After I lost, nobody called me the next day to say, "That was incredible. You raised several million dollars and ran a great race. You need to do it again." I think often-times when women lose, we don't run again because we think, *I only got 19 percent of the vote—I'm a loser.* Whereas men are like, "Wow, I got 19 percent of the vote. I'm incredible!" I kept thinking, *Gosh, if I feel this [disappointed]—and I'm someone who's pretty comfortable with failure—how must other women feel when they*

**"Take double leaps—apply for the job you're not qualified for, ask for opportunities instead of waiting for someone to give them to you."**

*don't get the job they applied for or they don't get into college?* I started writing a journal that ended up being my book, *Women Who Don't Wait in Line*.

#### How can we make things better?

I think part of it is about taking double leaps—applying for the job you're not qualified for, asking for opportunities instead of waiting for someone to give them to you, making sure we elevate and support women. I don't believe anything's going to change until we build this sisterhood of support.

#### Which brings us to Girls Who Code.

##### How did that come about?

When you run for office, you visit a lot of schools. I saw this gender disparity. I started wondering, *Why are girls not going into tech?* After I lost the election, I was considering how best to make an impact. I met with people who had been studying computer science and looking at this issue.

#### Were you a math-and-science kid?

I was terrified of math and science. It's something that haunted me. Even in my own campaign, if my website wasn't working or I wanted to build an app, I didn't know how to do it. I don't want any girl to feel like that. I always say, "If you want to be the next Hillary Clinton, you still have to learn how to code. It's a 21st-century skill."

#### What's your approach?

We found that just learning HTML is not going to inspire girls to fall in love with coding. Girls want to solve problems; they want to make their community and the world better.

#### What came next?

I had the idea of a summer program [in New York City]. I asked a friend to lend me a conference room. We had a group of 20 high school girls. I put it on my credit card and said, "Let's see what happens."

#### So what happened?

It was tremendous. The girls were building apps to help make voting easier. They were helping build websites for immigrant entrepreneurs. One of our girls built an algorithm to help detect whether a cancer is benign or malignant. Now we have 30 full-time staff and 170 part-time staff in the summer. We've grown tremendously in the last 12 months.

#### You're a new mom.

##### Any thoughts on life balance?

It's so important to have the right partner. I'm not so worried about whether having a baby will impede my career. I have this amazing partner who believes in me.

#### Parting advice?

Fail fast, fail hard, fail often. I'm a big fan of failure.



## ASK BUCKY

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**If you're asked in a job interview how much you currently earn, is it OK to lie to try for a considerable jump?**

*It's a very small world, and it's so connected. People within your industry can easily find out what you're earning, so it's always best to tell the truth. There are two smart ways I've seen this question handled: The first is to reveal your current salary but be clear about your thinking: "I'm earning X, but I'm not interested in making a change unless I can hit the Y mark." The other approach: Instead of answering the question directly, say, "I would like to be considered for the best salary possible for this position, because I feel my experience checks off most of the boxes." But I'd say that when asked, 90 percent of the people answer directly.*

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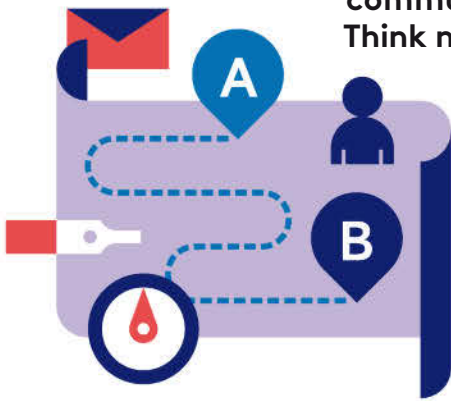
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# Hear ye, hear ye!

What's that you say? You want to communicate more effectively at work? Think not only message but also medium.



**THE FIRST STEP** in strong business communication is choosing the right method. “Most people default to e-mail,” says Marsha Egan, the CEO of InboxDetox.com, a workplace-productivity coaching firm in Nantucket, Massachusetts. “But when you’re trying to convey something that’s more feelings than fact,” she says, it’s better to use the phone or speak in person, so tone and body language can limit misunderstanding. Examples? Pitching a detailed idea, reprimanding poor performance, or sharing complex info. (One quick chat can equal a dozen e-mails.) Increase your odds of success with these policies.

THE GUIDE  
work & money



## IN E-MAILS: GET STRAIGHT TO THE POINT

“Your message should be no more than one screen long,” says communications coach Karen Friedman, the author of *Shut Up and Say Something*. “Put the most important info—who, what, where, when, why—in the first few sentences. Go into detail only as needed.” Use a clear subject line. If the topic ends up switching after some rounds, ditch the “Re: Re:” and start a new thread with a fresh subject. It is polite to recipients and makes searching (and toggling back and forth) easier.

## IN PERSON:

### DON'T BE BORING

HIT YOUR MOST IMPORTANT POINT FIRST, IN CASE A CHAT GETS CUT SHORT, SAYS FRIEDMAN: “IF THE FIRE ALARM WAS ABOUT TO GO OFF IN THE ROOM AND YOU COULD SAY ONLY ONE THING, WHAT WOULD IT BE?” HOLD SOMEONE’S ATTENTION BY MENTIONING THE PAYOFF (SAVING TIME AND SAVING MONEY ARE FAVORITES), AND REMEMBER THAT MOST OF US HEAR THINGS THROUGH A FILTER OF “HOW DOES THIS RELATE TO ME?” DELIVER THE ANSWER AND YOU’LL HAVE A PRODUCTIVE EXCHANGE.



Written by  
Kelli An

Illustrations by  
Eight Hour Day



## ON THE PHONE: STEER THE CONVERSATION

Have notes prepared before you make a call, even an internal one, so you stay on track and don’t forget anything. Keep pleasantries short. (Instead of saying, “How are you?” say, “Hope you’re having a good day.”) Next, state your business and how long it will take, says Egan: “I want to go over the presentation before tonight’s deadline. Do you have five minutes?” Then stick to that time frame. “Confirm conclusions after the call,” she says. Sending a brief e-mail reiterating the agreed-upon points or action items provides a record and ensures that important details don’t slip through the cracks.

## WATCH YOUR MOUTH

We’re all, like, always trying to, like, be careful about words and phrases that, like, chip away at our credibility, right? But as Lisa Schneider, the executive director of digital product management for Merriam-Webster, points out, some are so habitual, we don’t even notice the problem. She recommends striking a few from your work vocabulary and explains why.

## “HONESTLY”

“This word distracts from your message and might even make people subconsciously wonder if there are times when you’re *not* so honest. We often use it as an intro when we’re frustrated and being blunt. If that’s the case, simply say, ‘To put it bluntly.’”

## “YOU GUYS”

“Too casual for the workplace—it undermines your authority. If you all by itself sounds too stern, see if you can find a way to rephrase that uses the pronoun *we*. That feels both inclusive and professional.”

## “I MEAN”

“There’s a note of desperation in this phrase. It can come off as a plea to be understood. Take a beat when the “I mean” impulse hits and form a sentence with a strong start, like ‘I want,’ ‘I suggest,’ or ‘I recommend.’”

—ADRIANA GARDELLA



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# How to win at car insurance

Not exactly driven to explore this topic on your own? Let finance expert and consumer advocate Laura Adams of [insuranceQuotes.com](http://insuranceQuotes.com), a free shopping service, steer you in the right direction with these smart strategies.

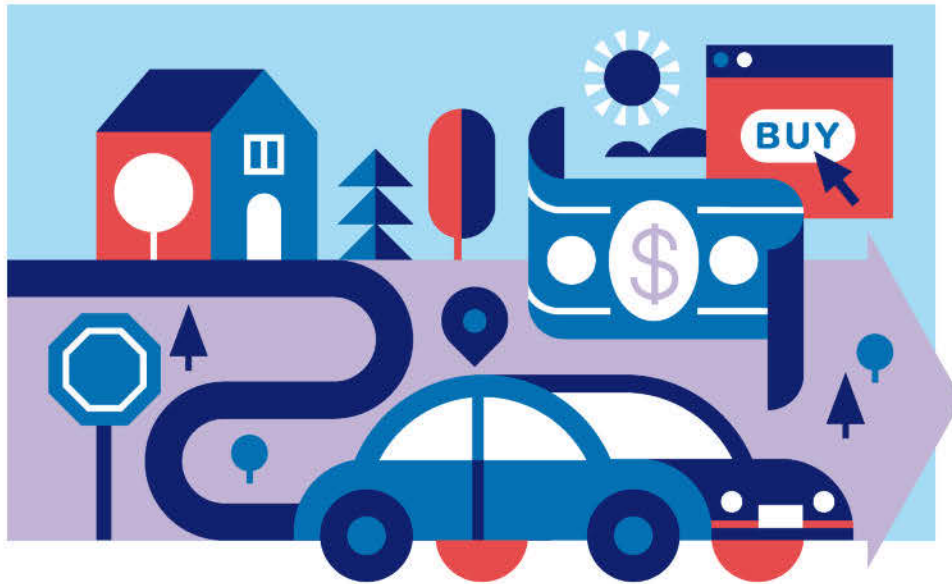


## EPIC (WORK) FAIL

In which one *Real Simple* reader reveals a hilariously humiliating workplace experience. This month's story comes from K.M., via Facebook.

"We had just moved into a brand-new office. New carpet, paint, furniture—the works. I was in a conference room looking at two very large whiteboards, analyzing how I was going to graph certain info, while having my morning coffee. I was alone, enjoying the quiet time to think. People started coming in, and chitchat ensued. I glanced down at my watch and realized I had a conference call in less than 10 minutes. What I *didn't* realize was that when I turned my wrist to check my watch, it was attached to the hand that held my giant full cup of coffee. Yes, I spilled coffee all over the pristine carpet not a week after we had moved in. Ugh!"

THE GUIDE  
work & money



### KEEP ALL YOUR INSURANCE POLICIES TOGETHER

Exploit discounts by using one company for all your needs (home, life, car). Bundling your policies might save you about 15 percent.

### DRIVE (VERY, VERY) RESPONSIBLY

Progressive, Allstate, and State Farm all offer free plug-in diagnostic devices (which fit into a port below the dashboard of most cars) that analyze your behind-the-wheel habits. Making complete stops and sticking to the speed limit can save you as much as \$150 a year. What may hurt your score, aside

from obviously dangerous behavior, like slamming on the brakes? Driving very late at night, when more accidents tend to happen. Most insurance companies also lower rates by 15 to 25 percent if high school or college-age drivers maintain a 3.0 GPA. Show proof of grades when you renew the policy.

### RAISE YOUR DEDUCTIBLE

Upping it from \$500 to \$1,000 can save you as much as 20 percent, depending on where you live. Typically, paying a bit more out of pocket in case of an accident costs less than paying a higher premium. Also, don't file a claim for minor damage unless your accident involved another person. Your rates can increase by up to 40 percent, for as long as five years. If it's a tiny dent, pay for the repair yourself.

### DRIVE LESS, CARPOOL MORE

Statistics tell insurance companies that those who are on the road more have a higher risk of accidents. If your car spends most of its time in the driveway,

ask about a discount for low mileage. For example, customers of Metromile, an insurer in California, Illinois, Oregon, New York, Virginia, Washington, and more states this fall, can save \$500 annually if they log fewer than 10,000 miles.

### EDUCATE YOURSELF

Call your insurer and say, "I'd like to hear about every available discount." Request a list. If, for example, your work helps others—teaching, civil service, military, medical—you may be eligible for a 5 to 10 percent break.

Written by  
Yelena Moroz



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**LOOK GOOD, FEEL BETTER**

Join Real Simple for National Beauty Editors Day on Thursday, August 6, 4-8PM at Saks Fifth Avenue in NYC. For just a \$40 donation, you'll get a 15 minute, one-on-one sit-down with Real Simple Beauty Director Heather Muir, and a fabulous gift bag from the beauty brand of your choice! All to benefit Look Good Feel Better, which helps women in cancer treatment to feel beautiful and confident. To register, visit [lookgoodfeelbetter.org/register](http://lookgoodfeelbetter.org/register).

**FIDELITY INVESTMENTS**

On Wednesday, May 13, Real Simple and Fidelity Investments co-hosted an evening of empowering financial conversations at The Bently Reserve in San Francisco. The night began with a keynote by Kathy Murphy, President of Fidelity Personal Investing, followed by a panel discussion moderated by Real Simple Editor Kristin van Ogtrop. Among the panelists were acclaimed actress and author Ali Larter, Williams-Sonoma's Janet Hayes, and A Band of Women's Christine Bronstein.

Attendees enjoyed a cocktail reception, spoke with Fidelity representatives, and mingled with guests including Jean Chatzky, financial editor of NBC's *Today* show. Fidelity offers workshops at local investor centers, including educational tools and resources on [fidelity.com/itstime](http://fidelity.com/itstime), a website dedicated to inspiring women to take control of their finances.



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# This is real

08.2015



JOSHUA LUTZ, *EXIT 17* (2012)



Bloggers and sisters  
Emma Chapman (left) and  
Elsie Larson are the  
authors of *A Beautiful Mess*  
*Happy Handmade Home*.





# HOME FOR GOOD

When two Missouri sisters set out to make over a house and donate it to a good cause, *Real Simple* pitched in with furniture picks and decorating tricks. The finished space is bursting with bright ideas, DIYs to try, and a whole lotta love.

## Living Room

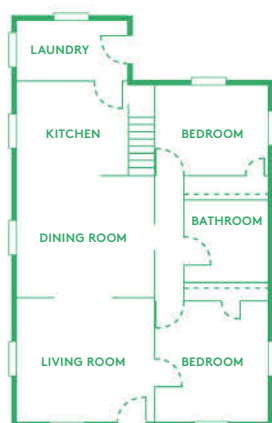
Ripping up the mauve shag carpeting led to a serendipitous discovery: original 1920s hardwood floors that needed only a quick polishing. "The walls were a dingy yellow, so we had to freshen them up. We chose a quiet paint shade [Paramount White by Valspar Reserve] to let the poppy pillows and splashy artwork stand out," says Chapman.

A neutral rug grounds all that color. Even in a tight space like this, it's easy to create a cushy conversation area if you stick with small-scale pieces that don't crowd the room: narrow couch, clean-lined table, and nonbulky, open-frame chairs. Greenery adds dimension—RS sprinkled in plants of various sizes to help the room feel serene and lush.

**SOME PEOPLE GIVE MONEY;** others lend their time. But when Elsie Larson and Emma Chapman, sisters and creators of the lifestyle blog *A Beautiful Mess*, started thinking about how to give back to their Springfield, Missouri, community, they decided to get crafty. "We thought, *What if we bought a house, used our DIY skills to give it a makeover, then handed it over to a local charity?*" says Larson. The two paid \$37,500 for a two-bedroom, one-bathroom bungalow-style fixer-upper and partnered with Habitat for Humanity for its make-a-difference mission: helping deserving families buy a home they can afford, to make a fresh start.

After kicking off the six-month-long renovation with a scrappy budget of \$10,000, the sisters tapped *Real Simple* to do the decorating. Once the main reno work was complete, RS filled the rooms with plush furniture and cheery accents to help make the space feel warm and welcoming. The result is even more powerful than Larson and Chapman had envisioned. "Seeing this once dilapidated property morph into something so charming and comfortable was incredible," says Larson. "All the ideas are easy and affordable, so anyone can use them in their own home."

Written by Stephanie Sisco  
Photographs by Matthew Williams  
Styling by Rachael Weiner



**THE FLOOR PLAN**  
The house is only 884 square feet, with rooms running into one another, so a unified palette was key to a cohesive look.

## Dining Room

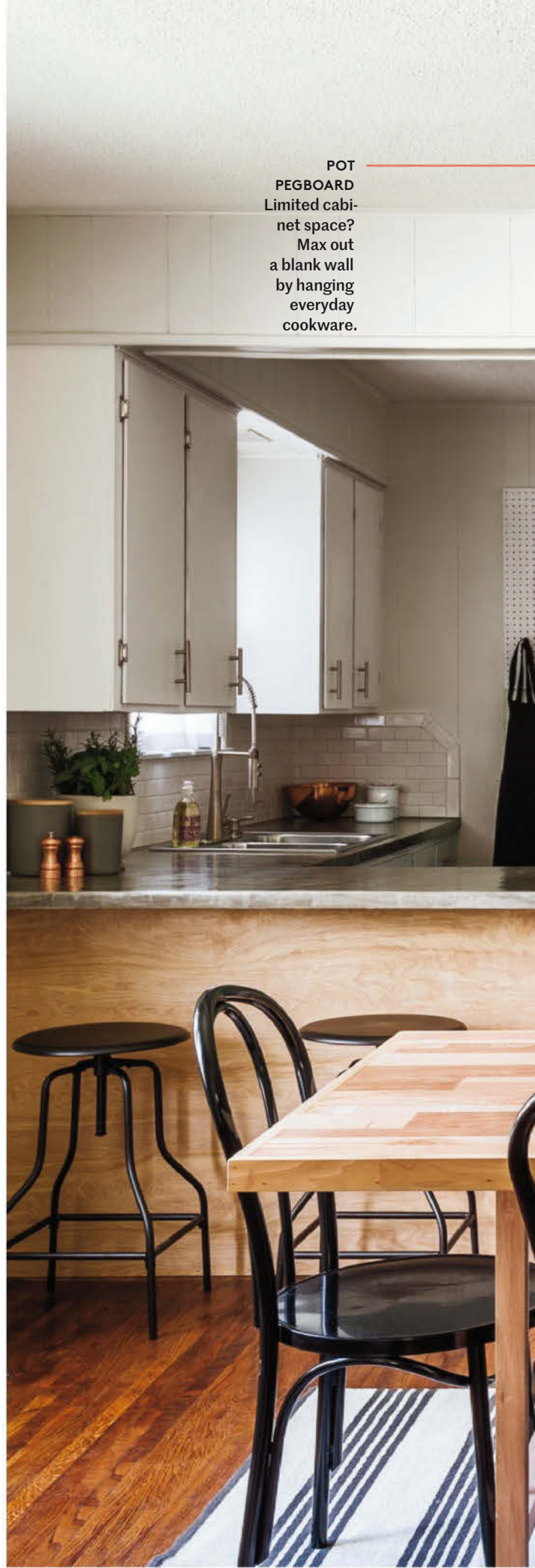
This central room is the home's main hangout area, so RS set it up with ample seating: industrial stools, plus curvy bentwood-style chairs in metal, to balance the boxy wooden table. Soft neutrals call for a bold rug. This graphic black-and-white one has a flat weave, which won't trap crumbs. Painted a bright mint green, the kitchen door pops. But the biggest wow factor comes from a lighting switch-up: clunky ceiling fan out, gorgeous globe lights in.



**BEFORE: DINING ROOM (FOREGROUND)  
AND LIVING ROOM**

**TO BUY:** Saxon stools by Ampersand, \$80 each, [bedbathandbeyond.com](http://bedbathandbeyond.com). Vintage Inspire side chairs by TMS, \$135 for two, [wayfair.com/RSbentwood](http://wayfair.com/RSbentwood). Reade Stripe dhurrie rug, \$495 (5 by 7 feet), [serenaandlily.com](http://serenaandlily.com). Brass City Chandelier 7, \$295, [schoolhouseelectric.com](http://schoolhouseelectric.com). Go-Cart carbon rolling cart, \$129, [cb2.com](http://cb2.com). Limoncello drinkers (on cart), \$55 each, [glassybaby.com](http://glassybaby.com). OXO Good Grips Pro cookware (on pegboard), from \$35 a piece, [oxo.com](http://oxo.com). Enamelware kitchen set, \$90; and ladle (on pegboard), \$30; [kaufmann-mercantile.com](http://kaufmann-mercantile.com). The LBA apron, \$150, [salthousemkt.com](http://salthousemkt.com). Creo mixing bowls (one shown, on table), \$70 for four; *Real Simple* round dinnerware (on cart), \$25 for a four-piece place setting; [bedbathandbeyond.com](http://bedbathandbeyond.com). **TO BUY (opening page):** Paidge sofa in Blue Stone linen weave, from \$1,099; Arrow Border cotton kilim rug by Steven Alan, \$749 (9 by 12 feet); [westelm.com](http://westelm.com). Mid-Century Modern Balance 3-arm floor lamp, \$375, [shadesoflight.com](http://shadesoflight.com). Boja bamboo pendant lamp, \$60; Storsele black rattan chairs, \$119 each; [ikea-us.com](http://ikea-us.com) for stores. Janlyn pillow, \$44, [luluandgeorgia.com](http://luluandgeorgia.com). Fiberclay prism pot, [shopterrain.com](http://shopterrain.com) for similar pots. Elizabeth Chapman art, [etsy.com/shop/MElizabethChapman](http://etsy.com/shop/MElizabethChapman) for info.

**POT  
PEGBOARD**  
Limited cabinet space? Max out a blank wall by hanging everyday cookware.





**COLOR PLAY**  
It's better if the artwork doesn't match the rest of the room. Unexpected hues keep a room from feeling one-note.



**DIY TO TRY**

The homemade dining table uses recycled plywood and other scrap woods. Total cost: \$125. For the how-to, visit [realsimple.com/ABM](http://realsimple.com/ABM).

#### DIY TO TRY

Giving counters a concrete finish costs less than \$200 and takes just a few days. For the how-to, visit [realsimple.com/ABM](http://realsimple.com/ABM).

**FAUCET FLIP**  
You don't need a whole sink overhaul to upgrade your kitchen—just trade a dinky faucet for an elegant gooseneck style (from \$200 at hardware stores).

**TILE TRICK**  
A mini version of classic subway tile gives the illusion of a larger cook space. Use white grout for a luxe look.

## Kitchen

The original hardwood flooring extended into the kitchen, and the sisters left most of it exposed. But other original features needed help. Cracked, dated Formica counters were swapped out for plywood and dressed up with a coating of concrete—a project that entails sanding, mixing and spreading the concrete, more sanding once the layers dry, and adding a sealer. “Applying the finish takes time, but it’s a surprisingly easy DIY,” says Larson. “We’ve even done it over existing Formica counters.” Instead of replacing the dull plywood cabinets, which would have cost thousands, the sisters jazzed them up with crisp white paint and modern brushed-nickel pulls.





#### MEALTIME SHORTCUT

Place a tiered rolling cart in an unused corner of a dining room and you've got a table-setting station. Just add everyday dishes and glasses, plus table linens in a basket. A chalkboard-paint wall lets you leave a cheery message.

## Spare Bedroom/ Office

Despite its small size (about 11 feet square), this room can work hard: Versatile furniture allows it to function as both a bedroom and a workspace. With a pullout storage drawer underneath, the daybed can be used as a twin or double bed. (The base can extend to hold a full-size mattress.) The accessories shelf, hung 28 inches from the ground, is just the right height for a desk when a chair is pulled up.

**TO BUY:** *Linear Cityscape*, by Daniela Butunoi, \$89 (14 by 11 inches, framed), [minted.com](http://minted.com). Acrylic-sided shelf, \$189, [westelm.com](http://westelm.com). Brass pencil holder, \$125, [shopphorne.com](http://shopphorne.com). Nuevo Max side chair, \$159, [wayfair.com/RSidechair](http://wayfair.com/RSidechair). Snow White rug, \$583 (7½ by 5 feet), [luluandgeorgia.com](http://luluandgeorgia.com). Moroccan leather pouf, from \$450, [serenaandlily.com](http://serenaandlily.com). Neon Dash blanket, \$79, [landofnod.com](http://landofnod.com). Hemnes daybed, \$299, [ikea-usa.com](http://ikea-usa.com) for stores. Marina white quilt in full/queen, \$392, [pineconehill.com](http://pineconehill.com). Patchwork lumbar pillow, \$35, [anekdesigns.etsy.com](http://anekdesigns.etsy.com). Black Mini Stick cushion, \$82, [cleverspaces.com](http://cleverspaces.com). Scandinavian Fir Tree pillow, \$36, [riveroakstudio.etsy.com](http://riveroakstudio.etsy.com).

**TO BUY (opposite page):** Chalked Clay urn, \$24 (large), [shopterrain.com](http://shopterrain.com). Fresco pull-down kitchen faucet, \$199, [lowes.com](http://lowes.com). Old Dutch International copper mixing bowl, \$40, [bedbathandbeyond.com](http://bedbathandbeyond.com). Washed Arrow woven rug by 4040 Locust, \$29, [urbanoutfitters.com](http://urbanoutfitters.com).



BEFORE: KITCHEN



**TEXTURE TIP**  
Mixing materials elevates a monochromatic scheme. Here, a plush shag rug and a smooth leather pouf with a quiltlike matte-lassé coverlet.

## HABITAT FOR HUMANITY: HOW DOES IT WORK, AND HOW CAN I HELP?

Habitat homes are typically sold to qualifying low-income families at a reduced price. Or, as with this house, they are put up for general sale, with revenues supporting more local home builds. (At press time, this house, newly on the market, had not yet sold.) Proceeds from the furnishings, sold at one of Habitat's ReStore boutiques, benefit the organization, too. Want to get involved? Here are three more ways.

**1 SHOP.** Buy gently used decorative items, discounted to a fraction of retail prices, at one of the 850 ReStore locations and your purchase helps fund Habitat for Humanity.

**2 VOLUNTEER.** Go to [habitat.org](http://habitat.org) to lend your services to a local home build or to offer your time to stock shelves or man the registers at a ReStore.

**3 DONATE.** Visit [habitat.org](http://habitat.org) to make a onetime monetary gift or to set up a monthly contribution.

## Master Bedroom

Sometimes the only spot for the bed is in front of a window—and that's OK. Embrace the setup and turn the window into a pseudo headboard by swagging lightweight curtains at the sides of the bed frame. A sleek, industrial-style lamp offsets the flowy fabric, and an accent wall painted the same shade as the kitchen door carries through the mint green scheme.



**CLUTTER CURE**  
The bed frame features roll-out drawers on both sides—a clever fix when a room can't fit a dresser.



BEFORE: BATHROOM

**TO BUY:** *Awning Stripes 2*, by Kristie Kern, \$179 (16 by 20 inches, framed), [minted.com](http://minted.com). *Ultramarine*, \$165 (8 by 10 inches, framed), [permanentpresseditions.com](http://permanentpresseditions.com). *Container Ship*, by Jorey Hurley, \$113 (10 by 12 inches, framed), [artfullywalls.com](http://artfullywalls.com). Industrial Pipe table lamp by Kingstown Home, \$175, [shadesoflight.com](http://shadesoflight.com). Isabel one-drawer nightstand, \$180, [wayfair.com/nightstand](http://wayfair.com/nightstand). Broad Stripe dhurrie rug in coral, \$58 (24 by 36 inches), [serenaandlily.com](http://serenaandlily.com). Classic Core sheet set in full, \$109, [brooklinen.com](http://brooklinen.com). Tiki Toile gray duvet cover in full/queen, \$198; and sham, \$44; and Town and Country gray matelassé coverlet in queen, \$280: [pineconehill.com](http://pineconehill.com). **TO BUY (opposite page):** Threshold Color Block shower curtain, \$20, [target.com](http://target.com). Sea Salt Neroli soap bar, \$8, [caldrea.com](http://caldrea.com). Cherry Blossom Liquid Marseille soap, \$25, [compagnie-deprovence-usa.com](http://compagnie-deprovence-usa.com).

Thank you!

*Real Simple* is grateful to the following vendors, whose donations helped make this project possible.

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- Lulu & Georgia
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- Salt House
- Schoolhouse Electric & Supply Co.
- Serena & Lily
- Shades of Light
- Target
- Terrain
- Urban Outfitters
- Wayfair
- West Elm





#### BEHIND-THE-SCENES VIDEO

Watch this project in progress at [realsimple.com/ABM](https://realsimple.com/ABM).



**DUAL HUES**  
Black-and-white herringbone floor tile turns an often overlooked spot into a high-style feature.

## Bathroom

Worn carpet and patchy walls (plaster plus drywall plus mirroring) made this room the most grim in the house.

Chapman and Larson had it torn up and redone with a sleeker tub (the old one was missing a standard showerhead!), a vanity with storage, and new tile throughout. (On the wall, the tile even covers an awkwardly placed window.) The wide-stripe shower curtain plays up the floor's two-tone tiles.



# JUST



NO-CHURN  
MANGO  
SORBET





# CHILL

**SAVOR THE LONG  
(AND LOW-EFFORT)  
DAYS OF SUMMER  
WITH THESE  
DELECTABLE  
NO-BAKE DESSERTS.**

Recipes by Chris Morocco and Ben Mims  
Photographs by Tom Schierlitz  
Food Styling by Jamie Kimm









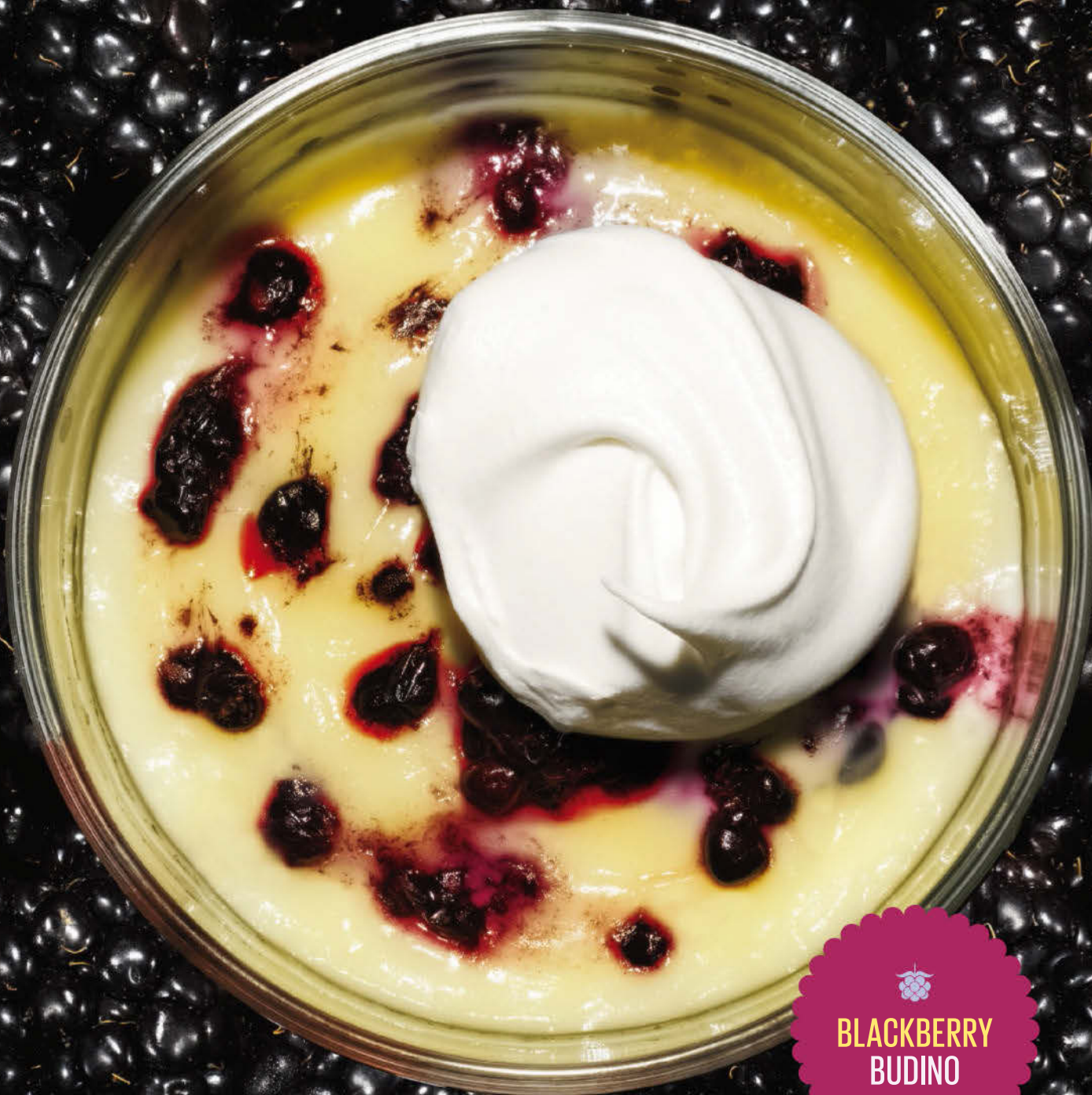
PEACH YOGURT  
PANNA COTTA











**BLACKBERRY  
BUDINO**





## NO-CHURN MANGO SORBET

HANDS-ON TIME **25 MINUTES**  
TOTAL TIME **5 HOURS, 25 MINUTES (INCLUDES FREEZING)**  
SERVES **12**

- 2 ripe mangoes (about 1½ pounds), chopped
- ½ cup sweetened cream of coconut
- ½ cup pineapple juice
- 2 tablespoons fresh lime juice
- 2 tablespoons pure maple syrup
- ¼ teaspoon kosher salt
- 1 cup unsweetened coconut flakes, toasted, for serving (optional)

**SPREAD** the mangoes in a single layer on a foil-lined baking sheet. Freeze until solid, at least 4 hours and up to overnight.

**PLACE** the frozen mango, cream of coconut, pineapple juice, lime juice, maple syrup, and salt in a food processor. Pulse until the mangoes are finely chopped. Continue to process until smooth, 6 to 8 minutes, scraping down the sides as necessary.

**TRANSFER** the sorbet to an airtight container and freeze until firm, at least 1 hour and up to 4 days.

**SERVE** sprinkled with the coconut, if desired.



## RASPBERRY-HIBISCUS POPS

HANDS-ON TIME **10 MINUTES**  
TOTAL TIME **6 HOURS, 10 MINUTES (INCLUDES FREEZING)**  
SERVES **8 TO 10**

- ⅓ cup sugar
- Kosher salt
- 1 cup raspberries (4 ounces)
- 3 hibiscus tea bags
- ¼ cup fresh lime juice

**BRING** 3 cups of water to a boil. Remove from heat and stir in the sugar and a pinch of salt. Add the raspberries and the tea bags. Steep the tea bags for 5 minutes; remove the bags and discard.

**REFRIGERATE** the tea until cool, 1 to 2 hours. Stir in the lime juice.

**POUR** the mixture into 10 3-ounce or 8 4-ounce ice-pop molds, dividing evenly. Insert the ice-pop sticks and freeze until firm, at least 4 hours and up to 4 days.



## LEMON-APRICOT CHEESECAKE

HANDS-ON TIME **40 MINUTES**  
TOTAL TIME **4 HOURS, 40 MINUTES (INCLUDES CHILLING)**  
SERVES **12**

- 1 5- to 7-ounce package shortbread cookies
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted
- Kosher salt
- 1 8-ounce block cream cheese, at room temperature
- ½ cup plus 1 tablespoon sugar
- 1 cup sour cream, at room temperature
- 1 teaspoon finely grated lemon zest plus 3 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 3 apricots or other stone fruits, thinly sliced

**PULSE** the cookies in a food processor until fine crumbs form. Add the butter and a pinch of salt and pulse to combine. Using a straight-sided dry measuring cup or glass, press the crumbs over the bottom and 2 inches up the sides of a 9-inch springform pan. Cover and chill until firm, 20 to 30 minutes.

**MEANWHILE**, beat the cream cheese and ½ cup sugar using an electric mixer on medium speed until very soft, 3 to 4 minutes. Add the sour cream, lemon zest and juice, vanilla, and a pinch of salt. Beat until smooth.

**BEAT** the cream in a separate bowl until soft peaks form; fold into the cream cheese mixture.

**POUR** the filling into the prepared crust and chill until firm, at least 4 hours or overnight.

**ONE HOUR BEFORE SERVING**, combine the apricots and the remaining 1 tablespoon of sugar. Let sit, tossing occasionally, until juicy, 10 to 15 minutes. Serve the cheesecake topped with the apricots.



## PEACH YOGURT PANNA COTTA

HANDS-ON TIME **30 MINUTES**  
TOTAL TIME **4½ HOURS (INCLUDES CHILLING)**  
SERVES **6**

- 2½ teaspoons (from one ¼-ounce packet) plus 1 teaspoon unflavored gelatin
- 1 vanilla bean
- 1 cup whole milk
- ⅔ cup sugar
- 3 cups plain whole-milk Greek yogurt
- Kosher salt
- 1 cup peach nectar

**POUR** ¼ cup cold water into a small bowl. Slowly sprinkle 2½ teaspoons of the gelatin over it and let sit until softened, 5 to 10 minutes.

**MEANWHILE**, split the vanilla bean in half lengthwise using a sharp paring knife. Run the dull side of the knife blade down the length of each half, scraping up the seeds. Combine the seeds with the milk in a large saucepan over medium heat and heat just until warm. Whisk in the sugar and the softened gelatin-water mixture until completely dissolved. Remove from heat. Whisk in the yogurt and a pinch of salt until well combined.

**DIVIDE** among 6 glasses and chill until set, at least 2 hours.

**POUR** 2 tablespoons cold water into a small bowl. Sprinkle the remaining 1 teaspoon of gelatin over it and let sit until softened, 5 to 10 minutes.

**HEAT** the peach nectar in a small saucepan over medium heat just until warm. Stir in the softened gelatin and whisk until completely dissolved.

**POUR** the peach mixture over the set panna cottas, dividing evenly. Chill until set, at least 2 hours and up to 3 days.





## BOOZY WATERMELON GRANITA

HANDS-ON TIME **30 MINUTES**  
TOTAL TIME **4½ HOURS (INCLUDES FREEZING)**  
SERVES **6**

- 1 small seedless watermelon, chopped (about 5 cups)
- ½ cup Campari or Aperol
- ½ cup agave nectar
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt

**PUREE** the watermelon in a blender and measure out 4 cups; reserve any remaining puree for smoothies or ice pops. Whisk in the liqueur, agave nectar, and salt until the agave and salt are dissolved.

**TRANSFER** the mixture to a 9-by-13-inch dish and freeze for 4 hours, scraping the mixture with a fork once every hour to create small flakes. The granita can be frozen, covered, for up to 1 week.

**SCOOP** the granita into 6 chilled glasses and serve immediately.



## BLACKBERRY BUDINO

HANDS-ON TIME **20 MINUTES**  
TOTAL TIME **1 HOUR, 20 MINUTES (INCLUDES CHILLING)**  
SERVES **6**

- ⅔ cup sugar
- 2 tablespoons cornstarch
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 large egg plus 1 large egg yolk
- 1½ cups heavy cream
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 6 ounces blackberries, mashed (¾ cup)
- Whipped cream, for serving

**WHISK** together the sugar, cornstarch, salt, egg, and egg yolk in a medium saucepan. Whisk in the cream.

**COOK** over medium heat, stirring continuously with a wooden spoon, until thickened and steadily boiling, 8 to 10 minutes. Remove from heat and stir in the butter and vanilla until the butter melts.

**DIVIDE** among serving bowls or glasses. Spoon the blackberries on top. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate until well chilled, at least 1 hour and up to 2 days.

**SERVE** topped with the whipped cream.



## ICE CREAM S'MORES

HANDS-ON TIME **20 MINUTES**  
TOTAL TIME **4½ HOURS (INCLUDES FREEZING)**  
SERVES **6**

- 1 tablespoon unsweetened cocoa powder
- ½ cup marshmallow fluff
- 6 graham crackers, broken into 12 squares
- 1 pint vanilla ice cream, slightly softened
- 3½ ounces bittersweet chocolate, chopped
- 1 tablespoon canola oil

**STIR** the cocoa powder into the marshmallow fluff in a medium bowl, adding a little at a time and stirring until smooth between additions. Spread evenly among 6 of the graham cracker squares. Divide the ice cream among the remaining squares, spreading evenly. Sandwich the squares together and freeze on a wax paper-lined pan until the ice cream is firm, at least 4 hours and up to overnight.

**MICROWAVE** the chocolate in a microwave-safe bowl on high in 20-second intervals, whisking in between, until melted and smooth. Add the oil and stir to combine. Dip half of each sandwich in the melted chocolate and return to the pan. Freeze until the chocolate sets, about 10 minutes. Keep frozen, covered, for up to 3 days.



**COOL IT**  
Get 22 more recipes at [realsimple.com/nobake-desserts](http://realsimple.com/nobake-desserts).





Renee and Ric were married on an idyllic lavender farm in Turlock, California, on May 3. Their son, Tyler, escorted the bride down the aisle.





# FROM THIS DAY FORWARD

IT COULD BE ANY WEDDING ANYWHERE:  
A RADIANT BRIDE GLIDES  
DOWN A ROSE PETAL-STREWN AISLE.  
A SHYLY GRINNING GROOM AWAITS.  
THE SCENE HAS “HAPPILY  
EVER AFTER” WRITTEN ALL OVER IT.  
BUT THIS PARTICULAR  
CELEBRATION HAS MORE STORY BEHIND  
IT THAN IT HAS TO COME.

THE GROOM, Ric Wilbourn, has Stage 3 multiple myeloma, an incurable blood cancer. Ric was diagnosed in 2013 and learned he had a life expectancy of five years. Until that point, he had been the picture of health—strong, active, athletic. Then, “just like that, my life dropped out from under me,” says Ric, 56. He and Renee, 43, have been together for 20 years and parents of son Tyler for nine. Their story is about joy, devotion—and what it’s like to marry the love of your life not at the beginning of your relationship but near the end.

Written by Stephanie Booth   Photographs by Aaron Wojack

## love at first ride

In 1995 Renee Schmitt, then 23 and working at a clothing store in Northern California, was invited by some friends on a weekend road trip to Reno. A guy named Ric (36 at the time), who was a manager at a biopharmaceutical company, was also invited. When that chilly March weekend rolled around, Ric ended up driving the gang in his old Ford Taurus, which wasn't particularly winter-friendly. Recalls Ric, "We had a 2½-hour drive, and I couldn't turn on the heat." The Taurus's engine couldn't take it and would overheat. Things got worse. "It started snowing so hard that I had

to stop on the side of the highway and put on snow chains. Everyone stayed bundled up inside the car—everyone but Renee," who kept Ric company as the snow swirled around them. He was impressed by the generous gesture. "It was freezing out there!" he says. "I knew right then that Renee was the one for me."

By the time they returned from Reno, Ric and Renee were a couple, and they immediately began enjoying life like any other couple—movies, dinner—and indulging in a shared love of karaoke. ("Best of My Love" for him; "The Rose" for her.) "Ric made me laugh," says Renee. "He was real." Within a year, they were living together. In 2003 they bought a home in Newman, California. In 2005 their son, Tyler, was born. Says Ric, "We knew we would grow old with each other." Marriage was always on the horizon; it just wasn't a focus.

## challenges from the start

Long before Ric was diagnosed, the other members of the family were struggling with serious health issues. From birth till age seven, Tyler suffered repeated febrile seizures. He also had severe asthma, which meant terrifying episodes and frequent hospital stays.

Renee was sick, too. Since high school, she had experienced mysterious episodes of extreme exhaustion and crippling joint pain. Each year, the symptoms worsened. Not until 2011 did Renee finally learn what was going on: She was diagnosed with ankylosing spondylitis, an incurable and debilitating inflammatory disease. Medication sometimes helped, but not always. "There were days the pain was so

**"JUST LIKE THAT, MY LIFE DROPPED OUT FROM UNDER ME," SAYS RIC.**

bad, I had to stay in bed," says Renee. Ric did a lot of the cooking and cleaning so Renee could rest. Explains Renee, "We don't have big families or relatives nearby." They really had only each other. Says Renee, "It made us even closer."

## a hint of wedding bells

Sometime in 2011, says Ric, "Renee and I were talking, and I said, 'You know. It's time. Let's go get a ring.'" After they did, Tyler, six, got really excited. "He kept asking me, 'When are you going to become a Wil-bourn?'" says his mom. But at the time money was very tight. In 2008 Renee had been laid off from her job as a senior business analyst at a bank and was unable to resume working due to her illness. Because the family was getting by on just one income, a wedding would have to wait. Of course, the couple could have zipped down to city hall and made it official. "Ric wouldn't have minded," admits Renee, "but I felt our wedding should be the way we wanted." They agreed to put it on the back burner till life evened out. At least, that was the plan.





## no symptoms, but serious trouble

Ric had always been the healthiest member of the household. He went to the gym, played basketball and football, and ate well. The most serious medical issue he'd had was knee pain. But when he had a physical in July 2013, a routine blood test didn't check out. Further tests revealed that Ric had advanced cancer, although he had no symptoms. While Renee and Tyler struggled daily with their chronic illnesses, Ric was dying. "I kept thinking, How can this be true when I feel so good?" he remembers.

Renee was devastated. "When Ric told me, I went numb," she says. Then her practical side took over. "I thought, We can deal with this, just like we deal with my illness and Tyler's illness."

Immediately after Ric's diagnosis, doctors discovered that the cancer had caused lesions on his spine. If not treated surgically, Ric would end up paralyzed. But chemotherapy and radiation had to happen first. To protect the spine from more harm during this period, Ric was made to wear a metal brace that attached to his skull and prevented his neck and head from moving.

For nine months, Ric wore the brace, sleeping propped up on pillows in a hospital bed at home. Because his mobility was limited,

Ric had to retire from his job at the biopharmaceutical company.

All the while, Ric had Tyler foremost in his mind. "If I felt down and out, Tyler did, too," he says. "Only when he saw me laughing and joking did he know that everything was OK for the moment. So that's what I tried to do." He and Renee didn't use the word *cancer* around Tyler. They referred to Ric's illness as "the bugs." (*"The medicine is going to take care of Daddy's bugs."*)

Although it was hard to do much in his brace, Ric managed to play Hot Wheels or toss a football with his little boy. "If I had a moment when I felt overwhelmed, I'd go outside and do something—anything—in the yard, to get my mind off [the cancer] till I could hold it together again for my son."

## an unexpected gift

Ric responded well to the radiation and weekly chemo. In early 2014, surgeons were able to strengthen his spine by fusing together several of his vertebrae (which basically shores up the area damaged by the cancer). Focusing on Ric's healing, Renee felt a wedding just wasn't that important anymore. "But," offers Ric, "I knew she wanted one."

A few months later, in the fall of 2014, a friend told Renee about a national nonprofit called Wish Upon a Wedding, which rallies event-industry experts to donate services to couples facing terminal illness. She urged Renee to write in.

Just days after Renee sent her e-mail describing the family's situation, she received a call from one of the organization's board members:



ABOVE: RIC AND TYLER IN 2009. OPPOSITE PAGE: RIC AND RENEE IN 1996, ABOUT A YEAR AFTER THEY MET AND FELL IN LOVE.

Wish Upon a Wedding wanted to give Renee and Ric the wedding they had talked about for two decades. Renee was thrilled. Granted, this news wasn't life-changing, but it offered a bright spot on the horizon—and a much needed distraction from hard realities.

Renee was introduced to a wedding designer and coordinator named Lori Cole, of nearby Turlock, California, who would oversee and arrange every detail. (Some Wish Upon a Wedding vendors register in advance on the organization's national database; others are recruited locally, as needed. Lori fell into the second category.)

Explains Lori, "When I first met Ric and Renee, walking and even riding in the car were tough for Ric. We found ways to work together online and by phone so he wouldn't have to travel as much."

After homing in on Renee's vision for the wedding (including a palette of "royal blue—with a little bling,"

Nimble and determined, Lori Cole and Wish Upon a Wedding managed to reschedule the event for May 3, three weeks after the original date.

## in sickness and in health

says Renee), Lori began calling vendors she had worked with in the area. The wedding date—a Friday afternoon in early April—was at the start of high season, but more than enough vendors were willing to commit, from florist and dj to caterer and photographer. (The overflow of vendors went into the Wish Upon a Wedding database for future opportunities.)

The whirlwind of planning gave Renee and Ric, who was still enduring weekly chemotherapy treatments, a welcome break. “So many people stepped forward to be involved,” says Renee.

One week before the wedding, a health crisis hit. But it wasn’t Ric who became ill—it was Tyler. A virus triggered a severe asthma attack that put him in the hospital for two weeks. “It got real tense for a while,” says Ric. “Renee with her condition, me with my situation, Tyler and his.” Ultimately, Tyler was OK. But, meanwhile, the wedding date had come and gone.

### Wish Upon a Wedding

is a nonprofit that donates weddings and vow renewals to couples across the United States facing terminal illness or a life-altering circumstance. Since 2010 the organization has donated more than 80 ceremonies. Recipients must be U.S. citizens and over the age of 18. Vendors who are willing to donate their services can join the database on the organization’s website. If you know someone in need of a “Wish” wedding, visit [wishuponawedding.org](http://wishuponawedding.org).

On Renee and Ric’s big day, the San Joaquin Valley is sunny and warm. Renee arrives at the lush lavender farm by limo, where a makeup artist and hairstylist prep her. Then she’s helped into her elegant cream-colored gown (lace bodice, crystal detailing—the whole shebang). Once the veil and the earrings are in place, she’s ready to go. Ric, in a tuxedo with a blue vest, stands at the altar. Tyler walks his mom down the aisle, dressed exactly like his dad. The sweetness of the moment is underscored by the intense look on Tyler’s face—he’s taking this walk-down-the-aisle job very seriously. When the family comes together, Ric kisses the top of Ty’s head. Tyler stays close as his folks read their vows, which culminate in the line, “You are my partner in life and my one true love. I will love you today, tomorrow, and forever.”

When Ric leans down to kiss the bride, the intimate group of three dozen guests erupts with applause. It’s a moment of pure joy, 20 years in the making.

Dinner is served outside at small tables—some white vintage wood, others draped in royal blue to match Ric and Ty. In the center of each table, white branches flecked with crystals and orchids catch the afternoon light. After the meal, Ric and Renee dance to “Uptown Funk” and mug for the photo booth. Tyler and his friends throw off their jackets and race across the farm. It’s a happy day—one that creates a nice memory in an extremely difficult time.

Instead of taking a honeymoon, tomorrow Ric and Renee will return to the real world. Ric will prepare for a bone-marrow transplant in the next few months. Tyler will continue dealing with his asthma. Renee will go back to battling daily exhaustion and pain, which may worsen over time.

## living for the moment

Has the wedding made a difference? Says Renee, “We will always be there for each other—whether married or not. But getting married made our family complete.”

Ric’s prognosis may never change. He works hard not to allow himself to feel frustrated or angry. “Deep inside it is killing me, but on the outside I’m up-tempo,” he says. After he left his job, Ric started a small dj business. (He loves music and even good-naturedly took over for the wedding dj for part of his reception.) Recently he registered with Wish Upon a Wedding to be a volunteer dj for other people’s events.

His real anchor is, of course, his family. “Renee is my lifeline,” he gushes. “She is my sweetie.” Tyler, he says, glowing as he mentions his son, “is a gift.”





RIC AND RENEE HAVE A CROWDFUNDING SITE TO HELP WITH MEDICAL EXPENSES. IF YOU WANT TO DONATE, VISIT [GOFUNDME.COM/HELP-RIC-FIGHT-CANCER](http://GOFUNDME.COM/HELP-RIC-FIGHT-CANCER).

THE COUPLE'S VOWS CULMINATE IN THE LINE "YOU ARE MY PARTNER IN LIFE AND MY ONE TRUE LOVE. I WILL LOVE YOU TODAY, TOMORROW, AND FOREVER."

Renee has noticed that after watching her tend so much to Ric (and vice versa), Tyler has developed a strong helping instinct: "Now, if someone gets cut, Ty runs to get his first-aid kit." He wants to be a police officer when he grows up.

Ric continues to undergo chemotherapy every two weeks; for now his cancer is in remission. Treatment can

hold off the cancer, but it can't cure it. He and Renee (Schmitt-Wilbourn, now) are going on with their lives. Right now they're planning a trip to Monterey Bay Aquarium with Tyler.

"Ty knows in the back of his head that I've got a bug in me," says Ric. "We all know it will come back. But until then I want to spend my time with the woman I love and my son." ■





# PAIN

How to understand (and manage) your body's most important warning system—and what to do when it goes awry.



Written by Amy Paturel  
Photographs by Jamie Chung  
Prop Styling by Megumi Emoto

**Y**OU'RE HIKING in the mountains when you hit a muddy patch. Suddenly you're flat on your back and a jolt of pain shoots down your spine. You yell "Owww!" (OK, maybe a few other choice words) as you pray that the searing sensation will pass. And that unbearable feeling? It's your body's personal alarm system, and it's sending a rallying cry through your body that may help you make your way back down the mountain on your own instead of on a stretcher.

If you're fortunate, your problem will be short-lived: The immediate pain will subside, and while you might be sore for a week or two, you'll heal and life will move on. But if you're not so lucky, your back may continue to hurt for weeks, months—even decades to come.

While unpleasant, pain is actually a crucial biological mechanism that protects you by making harmful activities hurt (think sticking your hand in a fire), and therefore things you don't want to do. It also motivates you to treat injuries and triggers a cascade of physiological reactions that spur healing, which ups the odds that you'll recover and survive. But too often what should be a brief injury or illness becomes the catalyst for a long-term problem.

About 100 million Americans—a majority of whom are women—suffer from some sort of chronic pain, meaning persistent discomfort that lasts for longer than three months, according to the Institute of Medicine of the National Academies. That's part of the reason that prescription-painkiller use has risen dramatically in the United States since 1999, according to the Centers for Disease Control.

Why can short-term pain become seemingly endless? Put simply, your body may not always do what it should. "When pain sets off an alarm in the brain, your nervous system is hardwired to protect you by reacting. Over time, particularly in the wake of untreated pain, that system can become hypersensitized," says Beth Darnall, Ph.D., an associate professor in the division of pain medicine at Stanford University and the author of *Less Pain, Fewer Pills*. Hypersensitivity causes the brain to magnify pain sensation. "The response that at first protects you begins to work against you," says Darnall. But there's much you can, and should, do to reduce your risk of getting stuck in a cycle of hurt.

## A MIND-BODY PROBLEM

Experts don't know for certain why one woman develops chronic pain while another with similar experiences, habits, and even genetics does not. Past painful experiences increase the risk, as does a history of trauma—but, again, not for everyone. What researchers do know is that ongoing pain occurs when something in the central nervous system goes awry. With acute pain, the central nervous system stops sending pain signals up the spinal cord and to the brain once the injury heals. But with chronic pain, those signals continue to fire long after the injury is gone. As a result, "nerve cells become responsive to incoming pain signals and more sensitive to weaker ones or even non-pain signals, like touch," says Paul J. Christo, M.D., an associate professor at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, in Baltimore. "It's like the whole nervous system is hyper-aroused." That's why you could have a "normal" X-ray—of your knee, say—yet be in anguish.

Imaging studies show that the brains of people with chronic pain are structurally different from those of nonsufferers. "Chronic pain shrinks neurons [nerve cells] in the brain's gray matter—that is, the thinking, emotion, and motivational centers of the brain," says Tor Wager, Ph.D., a professor of psychology and neuroscience at the Institute for Cognitive Science at the University of Colorado, in Boulder. In a landmark 2004 study, researchers at Northwestern University found that people who had suffered from back pain for more than a year had up to 11 percent less gray matter in certain areas compared with those who did not have back pain.

Thinning gray matter is linked to emotional distress and difficulty thinking, moving, and sleeping, which might explain why about a quarter of chronic-pain patients are clinically depressed. "The regions of the brain that light up when people experience anxiety or depression are some of the same regions that process pain," says Darnall. "When those brain-signaling systems go awry, people are vulnerable to both." And so pain experienced when you're feeling stressed, depressed, tired, or anxious seems stronger than pain experienced when you're hopeful, upbeat, or encouraged. Easing pain, however, can improve your mood—and if you do have depression, treating that often reduces pain, too.

## THE X FACTOR

One of the biggest risk factors for both acute and chronic pain is one you can't control: simply having two X chromosomes. A study published in *European Journal of Pain* showed that 37 percent of women experience pain of some sort on any given day, compared with 21 percent of men. While it is true that women are more likely than men to report pain and seek treatment, hormones also come into play. "Testosterone protects against pain," says



Christo. But estrogen can limit the activity of a gene called COMT, causing stress hormones to accumulate and triggering nerves to intensify pain. What's more, fluctuations of hormones—such as progesterone during the menstrual cycle, pregnancy, and perimenopause—may predispose women to experience discomfort.

Women are particularly prone to chronic pain, including some of the most common conditions, such as lower-back pain, arthritis, and headaches, says Afton Hassett, Psy.D., a clinical psychologist and an associate research scientist in the department of anesthesiology at the University of Michigan Medical School, in Ann Arbor. We're also more likely to develop fibromyalgia (widespread and persistent muscle pain), irritable bowel syndrome, and interstitial cystitis (bladder pain) than men.

Gender aside, surgery increases your risk of developing chronic pain, since it's essentially a controlled injury. "Whenever we introduce trauma—and cutting through tissue and nerves is traumatic—there's a real risk of prolonging pain," says Darnall. Studies show that almost a third of women who have a hysterectomy or a mastectomy experience persistent pain more than a year after surgery and that nearly a third of people who have a total hip replacement are in near constant pain months later. Dental work can be risky, too, with post-procedure pain rates as high as 13 percent.

The upshot: Using adequate pain control—such as epidurals, nerve blocks, local anesthetic, and oral and IV pain medication—during and after surgery can reduce the risk of developing chronic pain by 25 percent, suggest studies. If you're undergoing a surgery associated with a high risk of post-operative pain (for example, breast surgery or a Cesarean delivery), ask your surgeon and anesthesiologist to detail the pain-control protocol for during and after the procedure. You want to



be certain that both physicians have a plan and be confident that they're willing to try different approaches—quickly—if the pain control they're using isn't working.

### STOP THE CYCLE

You can reduce and even eliminate pain, and doing so can have positive long-term effects on your health and well-being. First, remember that medication is your friend—up to a

point. If your head is throbbing, don't try to tough it out, which may increase the odds that the pain sticks around. Instead, take an over-the-counter (OTC) pain medication. For both acute and chronic pain, you can safely take acetaminophen (such as Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Advil) according to the package directions for several weeks. But—and this is key—use the lowest dose that brings relief and take the medicine for the shortest period of time possible. "Use of acetaminophen





should not exceed 4,000 milligrams a day,” says Christo. (And if you have liver disease, check with your doctor.) Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, or NSAIDs, such as aspirin, ibuprofen, and naproxen (Aleve), are also safe for acute pain at the recommended doses. These drugs can be used regularly, but let your doctor know how often you’re taking them, because they can lead to health issues, such as heart problems and impaired kidney function, and your body can become dependent on them.

If you’ve had ongoing pain for two weeks, see a doctor, to ensure that you are best treating your pain. “Doing so may prevent your pain from becoming chronic,” says Darnall. A pain specialist—typically an anesthesiologist, a neurologist, a physiatrist, or an orthopedic surgeon who has received extra medical training in pain management—is crucial if you are coping with chronic pain. (Ask your physician for a recommendation.) The reality is, many doctors don’t understand how to treat pain effectively. Medical students receive limited training in pain, according to a 2011 *Journal of Pain* study. As a result, doctors may prescribe opioids, such as Vicodin and OxyContin (now some of the most widely prescribed drugs in the United States), instead of exploring other forms of relief. And although opioids can be remarkably effective in treating acute pain, they don’t cure chronic pain and should be used only with close supervision by a doctor.

An increasing number of experts believe opioids actually make matters worse by creating an altered state in the brain that numbs the pain—along with everything else. “Over time, you develop a tolerance to opioids and an insensitivity to naturally rewarding events,” says Wager. And that sets a person up for addiction.

As for other prescription medications that can help with chronic pain, there’s no magic bullet. But there are

options. “Antiseizure and antidepressant medications work on the same neurotransmitters—serotonin, norepinephrine, and glutamate—involved in anxiety and depression, so they can, in effect, treat both pain and depression,” says Hassett. Ask your doctor about these medications if you have chronic pain—and know that there are other ways to find relief beyond a prescription.

## THINK ABOUT IT

Pain isn’t all in your head, but it does start there, which is why mind-centered techniques can go a long way toward easing aches. Here are six to consider.

**1. BELIEVE THAT YOU’LL FEEL BETTER SOON.** Defaulting to the worst-case scenario (“I’ll never be OK again”) is associated with experiencing more intense pain, developing chronic pain after surgery or an injury, and having reduced response to painkillers, research shows.

Conversely, simply anticipating relief can make you feel better. “Research has shown that a placebo can be as effective as a strong dose of morphine,” says Daniel Clauw, M.D., a professor of anesthesiology at the University of Michigan School of Medicine, in Ann Arbor. Placebos activate the internal pharmacy by releasing pleasure-increasing, pain-relieving endorphins in the brain. So if you believe a therapy will work—whether it’s a pill, a procedure, or a technique, such as meditation—chances are, you’re right.

**2. CONSIDER THERAPY.** If you’re having trouble moving past worst-case scenarios, a form of psychotherapy called cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) can teach you to swap negative thought patterns for more positive thoughts and behaviors. According to a 2012 study published in *Archives of Internal Medicine*, CBT reduced pain in 30 percent of British patients with

chronic, widespread pain, compared with just 8 percent of those using only conventional pain treatments, like medication.

**3. REFRAME YOUR PAIN.** Christo encourages people with chronic pain to change the way they think about their experiences. Instead of focusing on the sting of a burn, for example, try viewing it as a warm, tingly sensation. Discomfort won’t magically disappear, but you’ll have more control over your emotional response, which can reduce the pain’s intensity.

**4. DISTRACT YOURSELF.** Your brain can focus on only so much at once. Concentrate on pain and you’ll increase the agony; divert your attention and the pangs will diminish, says Christo. While listening to music, seeing friends, and exercising are all effective, mind-body practices are among the best ways to self-distract, according to recent evidence from the National Institutes of Health. Yoga, mindfulness-based stress-reduction programs, and similar techniques can counteract the brain changes that stem from chronic pain.

**5. MEDITATE.** In a 2011 study from the Wake Forest University School of Medicine, in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, patients experienced a 40 percent reduction in pain intensity and 57 percent less distress from pain while meditating. (That’s more effective than morphine.) Mindfulness meditation may influence the brain in ways that make the body less sensitive to pain.

**6. GET STUCK.** Sticking needles in your skin when you’re already hurting may seem counterintuitive, but studies show that acupuncture works. People who received 12 acupuncture treatments over the course of two months relieved headache pain during treatment and for several months afterward, according to a 2005 study in *British Medical Journal*. Acupuncture reduces stress levels, which may reduce pain, researchers believe. ●



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**GENTLE GIANT**  
Unlike smaller, hotter jalapeños, poblano peppers are mild and fruity. Fun fact: When dried, they turn brick red and are called anchos.

## SIZE MATTERS

Smaller eggplants are less bitter than big ones, with skin that's tender enough to eat. Just slice and grill (page 178).



Photographs by Charles Masters  
Food Styling by Chris Lanier

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## EASY DINNER

# 1

# Grilled curried chicken breasts with peach and green bean salad

HANDS-ON TIME **30 MINUTES** TOTAL TIME **1½ HOURS (INCLUDES MARINATING)** SERVES **4**

- 1/2 cup plain yogurt
- 2 tablespoons curry powder
- 4 6-ounce boneless, skinless chicken breasts
- Canola oil, for the grill
- 3 peaches, cut into wedges
- 1/2 pound green beans, trimmed
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- Kosher salt and black pepper
- 1 head red leaf lettuce, leaves torn
- 2 tablespoons white wine vinegar

**COMBINE** the yogurt and curry powder in a large resealable plastic bag. Add the chicken and turn to coat. Refrigerate at least 1 hour and up to overnight.

**HEAT** grill to medium. Once it's hot, clean the grill grate with a wire brush. Just before grilling, oil the grill grate with the canola oil.

**TOSS** the peaches and green beans with 1 tablespoon of the olive oil and 1/4 teaspoon each salt and pepper. Grill the peaches, turning once, just until warmed through, 3 to 4 minutes. Grill the green beans in a grill basket or on a sheet of foil until crisp-tender, 4 to 6 minutes. Remove the chicken from the bag and season with 1/2 teaspoon salt and 1/4 teaspoon pepper. Grill the chicken until cooked through, 4 to 5 minutes per side. Let rest for 5 minutes before slicing.

**TOSS** the peaches, green beans, and lettuce with the vinegar, the remaining 2 tablespoons of olive oil, and 1/4 teaspoon each salt and pepper. Top with the chicken.



FOOD

#### NUTRITION NOTES

Information on fat, calories, and sodium content for every RS recipe can be found on RealSimple.com. Just scroll to the bottom of the recipe.

Recipes by Chris Morocco



(✓) Quick Cooking  
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(✓) Slow Cooker  
(✓) One Pot  
(✓) Whole-Grain  
(✓) Vegetarian  
(✓) Gluten-Free

## EASY DINNER

# 2

# Pork and pineapple tacos

HANDS-ON TIME **30 MINUTES** TOTAL TIME **1½ HOURS (INCLUDES MARINATING)** SERVES **4**

FOOD



- 1 20-ounce can pineapple chunks in juice
- 1 tablespoon chili powder
- 1 pound pork tenderloin, cut into 1/2-inch slices
- 2 jalapeños, thinly sliced
- 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
- 2 tablespoons canola oil
- 12 corn tortillas, warmed
- 1/2 red onion, sliced
- 1/4 cup fresh cilantro
- 1/2 cup crumbled Cotija, ricotta salata, or Feta (4 ounces)
- Lime wedges, for serving

**COMBINE** 1/2 cup pineapple juice (reserving the chunks), the chili powder, pork, and half the jalapeños in a large resealable plastic bag. Refrigerate for at least 1 hour and up to 4 hours. Remove the pork from the marinade, shake off the excess liquid, and season with salt.

**HEAT** 1 tablespoon of the oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Cook the pork in batches until just cooked through, 3 to 4 minutes per side, adding the remaining tablespoon of oil between batches. Thinly slice.

**TOP** the tortillas with the pork, pineapple chunks, onion, cilantro, cheese, and the remaining jalapeño.

**SERVE** with the lime wedges.



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## EASY DINNER

# 3

# Rib-eye steak with tomato vinaigrette and smashed potatoes

HANDS-ON TIME 30 MINUTES TOTAL TIME 30 MINUTES SERVES 4

FOOD

- 1 1/4 pounds fingerling potatoes
- Kosher salt and black pepper
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh chives
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 4 tablespoons sherry or red wine vinegar
- 1 pint cherry or grape tomatoes, halved
- 2 teaspoons sugar
- 2 boneless rib-eye steaks (1 inch thick; about 2 pounds total)

**PLACE** the potatoes in a large pot and add enough cold water to cover. Bring to a boil and add 2 teaspoons salt. Reduce heat and simmer until very tender, 15 to 18 minutes. Drain and return to the pot. Toss in the chives, 2 tablespoons of the oil, 1 tablespoon of the vinegar, and 1/4 teaspoon each salt and pepper. Lightly flatten each potato with a spoon. Cover to keep warm.

**MEANWHILE**, combine the tomatoes, sugar, 3 tablespoons water, the remaining 3 tablespoons of vinegar, and 1/4 teaspoon each salt and pepper in a medium saucepan over medium-high heat. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the tomatoes are soft and the liquid is thickened, 6 to 8 minutes.

**HEAT** the remaining tablespoon of oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Season the steaks with 1/2 teaspoon salt and 1/4 teaspoon pepper. Cook until an instant-read thermometer inserted into the thickest part of each steak registers 130° F, 4 to 5 minutes per side for medium-rare. Let rest for 5 minutes, then slice against the grain.

**SERVE** the tomato vinaigrette over the steak with the potatoes alongside.





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Big Batch  
Slow Cooker  
One Pot  
Whole-Grain  
Vegetarian  
Gluten-Free

## EASY DINNER

# 4

# Grilled eggplant and smoked mozzarella melts

HANDS-ON TIME 25 MINUTES TOTAL TIME 25 MINUTES SERVES 4

FOOD



Canola oil, for the grill

4 large slices country bread (1 inch thick)

2 medium eggplants, sliced 1/2 inch thick

1/4 cup olive oil, plus more for serving

Kosher salt and black pepper

1 clove garlic, halved

12 ounces smoked mozzarella, cut into 8 slices

2 large tomatoes, sliced

1 cup fresh basil

Green salad, for serving

**HEAT** grill to medium. Once it's hot, clean the grill grate with a wire brush. Just before grilling, oil the grill grate with the canola oil.

**BRUSH** the bread and eggplant with the olive oil and season with 1/2 teaspoon salt and 1/4 teaspoon pepper. Grill the bread until browned and crisp, 1 to 2 minutes per side; rub with the garlic. Cut each slice in half crosswise. Grill the eggplant slices, turning occasionally, until tender, 6 to 8 minutes.

**PLACE** the mozzarella on top of the bread and grill, covered, just until warm and beginning to melt. Top with the eggplant, tomato, and basil. Drizzle with olive oil, sprinkle with salt and pepper, and serve with the salad.



**MADE WITH**

99%	Accent
1%	Chair



**MADE WITH**

100%	Turkey Breast
------	---------------



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## EASY DINNER

# 5

# Summer tomato soup with shrimp, zucchini, and corn

HANDS-ON TIME **20 MINUTES** TOTAL TIME **40 MINUTES** SERVES **4**

FOOD



- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 poblano peppers, seeded and chopped
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, sliced
- Kosher salt and black pepper
- 2 small zucchini, chopped
- 1 28-ounce can diced tomatoes
- 1 pound raw medium peeled and deveined shrimp
- 2 cups fresh (from 4 ears) or frozen corn kernels, thawed

**HEAT** the oil in a large pot over medium-high heat. Add the poblanos, onion, garlic, and  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon each salt and black pepper. Cook, stirring, until softened, 10 to 12 minutes. Add the zucchini and tomatoes (and their juices). Cook, stirring, until the zucchini is crisp-tender, 12 to 15 minutes.

**ADD** the shrimp, corn, and 3 cups water. Bring to a simmer. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the shrimp are white throughout and the corn is tender, 5 to 6 minutes. Sprinkle with black pepper and serve.



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# COCKTAIL MIXERS

Skip the measuring and the muddling. If you want a shortcut to happy hour—or the tastiest cola for your Cuba libre—try these just-add-alcohol mixes and sodas.

Written by Heath Goldman  
Photographs by Levi Brown

REALSIMPLE  
ROAD TEST



1

**1 BEST TONIC**  
**Fever-Tree Mediterranean Tonic**  
For gin or vodka, this not-too-sweet staple has Champagne-like bubbles that fizz until the final sip.  
**TO BUY:** \$6.50 for four 6.8-ounce bottles, at supermarkets.

2

**2 BEST MARGARITA**  
**Powell & Mahoney Margarita Mixer**  
Any tequila, even a budget buy, tastes great with this blend's ideal ratio of real lime juice to salt and sugar.  
**TO BUY:** \$8 for a 25.36-ounce bottle, at supermarkets.

3

**3 BEST BLOODY MARY**  
**Powell & Mahoney Bloody Mary Mixer**  
Not too thick, not too thin, this crowd-pleaser has a fresh tomato flavor with a hit of horseradish.  
**TO BUY:** \$8 for a 25.36-ounce bottle, at supermarkets.

4

**4 BEST BELLINI**  
**Williams-Sonoma Passion Fruit Bellini Mix**  
The peach-based cocktail gets a tropical upgrade with passion fruit. Top with Champagne or Prosecco for a fast (and fancy) brunch drink.  
**TO BUY:** \$15 for a 12.5-ounce bottle, Williams-Sonoma.

5

**5 BEST MARTINI**  
**Stirrings Dirty Martini**  
Olive lovers, listen up: Add this intense Spanish-olive brine to vodka or gin and vermouth for an extra-savory punch.  
**TO BUY:** \$5 for a 12-ounce bottle, at supermarkets.

FOOD

## LIKE A VIRGIN— OR NOT

Enjoy these sparkling beverages straight-up or with your spirit of choice.

FOOD



### 6 BEST COLA

#### 365 Everyday Value Cola

Natural cola flavor and cane sugar offer that familiar soda-pop taste without sodium or high fructose corn syrup—or caffeine, for that matter. Perfect in a classic rum and “Coke.”

**TO BUY:** \$3 for six 12-ounce cans, Whole Foods.



### 7 BEST GINGER SODA

#### Williams-Sonoma Spindrift Sparkling Cocktail Mix, Moscow Mule

Staffers chose this brew for its intense ginger bite tempered by lime. Mix with vodka for a Moscow Mule or rum for a Dark 'n' Stormy.

**TO BUY:** \$17 for a 25-ounce bottle, Williams-Sonoma.



### 8 BEST CITRUS SODA

#### Whole Foods Market Lemon Italian Soda

When you need bubbles, simple syrup, and citrus for sangria or a spritzer, use this 3-in-1 solution. On its own, it's a brisk thirst-quencher.

**TO BUY:** \$3 for a 33.81-ounce bottle, Whole Foods.



### 9 BEST TROPICAL SODA

#### Whole Foods Market Tropical Blend Italian Soda

This bubbly blend of mango, passion fruit, and orange can mix with just about any liquor for instant beachy drinks in your own backyard.

**TO BUY:** \$3 for a 33.81-ounce bottle, Whole Foods.



**BOTTLE SERVICE**  
To see the packaging for these potions, go to [realsimple.com/cocktailmixers](http://realsimple.com/cocktailmixers).



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IN A  
SNAP



# Things Cooks Know

Simplifying strategies, techniques, and tips—  
from the *Real Simple* test kitchen to yours

## A BETTER WAY TO SLICE PEPPERS

The clump of seeds and the strips of membrane clinging to the interior of a bell pepper can be tricky to get around. Slice the pepper down the middle and you'll be chasing seeds and plucking at spongy strips with your fingers. Instead, try this technique.



**1. POSITION** a knife along the edge of the top of the pepper. Slice down, cutting off the "wall," avoiding the seeds and slicing off the membrane ribs as you go.



**2. REPEAT** on the other three sides of the pepper. You'll have four flat planks. Discard the stem and the core with the seeds and the ribs. Slice off the base.

**3. SLICE** or dice the pepper planks into strips or chunks.

Written by  
Chris Morocco  
Illustrations by  
Melinda Josie



## How to use gelatin

For most creamy custards, you need to cook a milk and egg base *just* right—without scrambling the eggs. But gelatin gives you an almost fool-proof wobbly finish. It's a key ingredient in panna cotta (see recipe, page 156), a classic Italian dessert with a silky texture somewhere between mousse and Jell-O. Powdered gelatin, a nearly tasteless protein (it's made from animal tissue), can turn any liquid into a silky solid. But you have to handle it properly. First, sprinkle the gelatin over cold water so that it can hydrate. (Gelatin needs to be dissolved to set; adding it directly to hot liquid, however, will cause it to clump.) When the gelatin granules soften in the water and the mixture forms a disk, stir the disk into a warm base, like sweetened cream for panna cotta, until it dissolves. This breaks down the protein bonds, which will re-form in the final step, chilling. As the dessert cools, the protein molecules connect again, trapping the liquid in a (very delicious) suspension.

## Not-just-for-pepper mill

The same way freshly ground peppercorns add a more potent punch than preground pepper does, any whole spice, freshly ground, will give you bolder flavor than its ready-to-shake counterpart. (And there's this: Whole spices retain their freshness and

flavor longer, making them a better value.) You don't need a special spice grinder—just co-opt a pepper mill. Try one of the aromatic combinations below to rub on meats or vegetables before grilling or roasting.

- Fennel seed, red pepper flakes, and pink peppercorns
- Caraway seed, dried dill, and smoked salt
- Cumin seed, coriander seed, and dried oregano





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WHY NOT TRY...?

**aw, shucks**

A medium ear will give you about  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of kernels. In the off season, use frozen corn in any of these recipes. Thaw, then pat dry if it's very wet.



**SALUTE THE KERNEL**  
For more easy, delicious corn recipes, go to [realsimple.com/corn](http://realsimple.com/corn).

# CORN

Will kernels get stuck in your teeth? Probably. But summer corn is worth it. Look for taut, green husks and yellow to light brown silk tips. It's OK to peel back a sliver of husk to check for plump kernels, but don't disrobe the cob. It won't stay as fresh. Want new ways to enjoy corn? Ear ya go.

**close to home**

For the sweetest corn, go for just-picked from a local farm. The sugar in corn starts converting to starch the moment the ear is plucked, so freshest is always best.

Recipes by Chris Morocco  
Photographs by Levi Brown  
Food Styling by Maggie Ruggiero

1**Corn polenta with shrimp**

Cook 1 cup **POLENTA** in 1 quart simmering **LOW-SODIUM CHICKEN BROTH** in a large pot over medium heat, whisking, until creamy, 25 to 35 min. Stir in 1 cup fresh **CORN KERNELS**. Cook 1 each chopped **ONION**, **POBLANO PEPPER**, and **GARLIC CLOVE** in 2 Tbsp. **OLIVE OIL** until soft, 8 to 10 min. Stir in  $\frac{3}{4}$  lb. peeled, deveined **SHRIMP** and **SALT** and **BLACK PEPPER**. Cook until opaque, 5 to 6 min. Serve over the polenta with **HOT SAUCE**. SERVES 4.

2**Grilled corn with harissa yogurt**

Combine  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup plain **GREEK YOGURT** and 1 Tbsp. each **LEMON JUICE** and **HARISSA** (or hot sauce). Season with **SALT** and **PEPPER**. Brush 4 halved ears fresh **CORN** with 2 tsp. **CANOLA OIL**. Season with **SALT** and **PEPPER**. Grill over medium heat, turning occasionally, until browned and crisp-tender, 6 to 8 min. Serve with the yogurt for dipping or spreading. SERVES 4.

3**Sautéed corn with coconut milk, chili, and basil**

Cook 2 chopped **SHALLOTS**, 1 sliced **RED CHILI PEPPER**, and 1 Tbsp. chopped **GINGER** in 2 Tbsp. **CANOLA OIL** over medium-high heat until fragrant, 1 min. Add 2 cups fresh **CORN KERNELS**. Cook, tossing, until the corn is crisp-tender, 3 to 5 min. Season with **SALT**. Serve drizzled with  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup **COCONUT MILK** and topped with torn fresh **BASIL**. SERVES 4.

4**Corn and tomato salad with cumin-lime dressing**

Combine 2 Tbsp. each **OLIVE OIL** and **LIME JUICE**,  $\frac{3}{4}$  tsp. **CUMIN SEEDS**, and **SALT** and **PEPPER**. Toast 1 **PITA BREAD**, then brush with 1 Tbsp. **OLIVE OIL**. Tear into pieces and toss with 1 cup fresh **CORN KERNELS**, 1 cup halved **CHERRY TOMATOES**, 4 quartered **RADISHES**, 2 sliced small **CUCUMBERS**, and the dressing. Top with torn fresh **MINT**. SERVES 4.

5**Parmesan corn pudding**

Puree 1 cup fresh **CORN KERNELS**, 2 **EGGS**,  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup **MILK**, 2 oz. grated **PARMESAN** ( $\frac{1}{2}$  cup), and 3 Tbsp. **CORNMEAL** in a blender. Stir in 1 cup fresh **CORN KERNELS** and 2 chopped **SCALLIONS**. Melt 2 Tbsp. **UNSALTED BUTTER** in a small ovenproof skillet over medium heat. Pour in the corn mixture and bake in a 350° F oven until set, 30 to 35 min. Top with sliced **SCALLIONS**. SERVES 4.

6**Nachos with fresh corn salsa**

Combine 1 cup fresh **CORN KERNELS**,  $\frac{1}{2}$  chopped **RED ONION**, 3 Tbsp. **LIME JUICE**, 1 chopped **JALAPEÑO**, and **SALT** and **PEPPER**. Spread 8 ounces of **CORN TORTILLA CHIPS** on a foil-lined baking sheet. Top with 1 cup grated **CHEDDAR**. Bake in a 400° F oven until the cheese melts, 5 to 6 min. Serve topped with the corn salsa, fresh **CILANTRO**, **SOUR CREAM**, and chopped **AVOCADO**. SERVES 4.





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- 3 cups white whole-wheat flour, plus more for shaping the dough
- $\frac{1}{3}$  cup plus 1 tablespoon granulated sugar
- 1 tablespoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 12 tablespoons ( $1\frac{1}{2}$  sticks) unsalted butter, cut into pieces
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cups fresh blueberries
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup chopped crystallized ginger
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup milk, plus more for brushing
- Turbinado sugar, for sprinkling

**HEAT** oven to 375° F. Line a large baking sheet with parchment paper.

**WHISK** together the flour, granulated sugar, baking powder, and salt in a large bowl. Add the butter and blend with a pastry blender or your fingers until crumbly. Fold in the blueberries and ginger. Stir in the milk.

**TRANSFER** the dough to a lightly floured surface and form into two 6-inch disks. Using a chef's knife, cut each disk into 6 wedges. Place the wedges on the prepared sheet, brush with milk, and sprinkle lightly with the turbinado sugar.

**BAKE**, rotating once, until golden brown, 25 to 30 minutes. Cool on the pan. Serve warm or at room temperature.

Recipe by Chris Morocco

Photograph by Christopher Testani

Food Styling by Maggie Ruggiero

## Blueberry and ginger scones

These zingy, easy-bake pastries make lazy summer mornings that much sweeter. And what better way to use up a bounty of blueberries?

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TOTAL TIME **50 MINUTES**  
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# A Life in Full

EVEN A HIGH-PROFILE DOCTOR AND MOTHER OF TWO CAN FIND TIME FOR MOMENTS OF JOY IN HER PATIENT-PACKED SCHEDULE. HERE'S HOW SHE MANAGES TO DO IT.

## FAMILY TIES

"As the kids get older, their schedules keep getting busier—horseback riding, soccer, hip-hop. It was so much easier when they were younger."



6:50 A.M. "Shari and I adopted Rife and MacKenzie at birth—they're not biologically related. We are fortunate that where we live, people are accepting of our family diversity."

## VALERIE WATIKER, 49

- Doctor specializing in pediatrics and clinical genetics
- Married to Shari Genser, with a son, Rife, 14; and a daughter, MacKenzie, 11
- Los Angeles



7:10 A.M. "Since Shari works in the TV industry and leaves early, I usually get the kids ready in the A.M. It's a wonderful, rare day when we're both home to take the kids to the bus stop."

## WORK FLOW

"I'M LUCKY I HAVE A GREAT STAFF TO HELP ME STAY ON SCHEDULE."



8:30 A.M. "Before heading to my private pediatric practice, I visited a genetics patient. Depending on the day—or the hour—I'm either a general pediatrician or a genetic specialist."



11:00 A.M. "The waiting room is actually a big playroom. So when I have a break between patients, I take advantage of being a pediatrician and go play cars with one of the children."



1:15 P.M. "I'm having lunch with Julia Hobbs, who was my daughter's speech pathologist. She asked me to join the St. John's Health Center's cleft-palate team. Now we're friends and colleagues."



## MOBILE CARE

"A lot of my time is spent driving from center to center—I have patients at three different ones. I'm always on the phone."

5:30 P.M. "I'm also clinical chief of pediatrics at Cedars Sinai Medical Center and need to attend an executive meeting. I have about three meetings a week. Then it's home for dinner."

Photographs by Emily Kinni





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